Week ending May 22 1954
Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

Douglas Bader is captured —and escapes

PAUL BRICKHILL'S "REACH FOR THE SKY"— THE EXCITING BIOGRAPHY OF THE MAN NOBODY COULD CONQUER

Stories by Gerald Kersh and Lyn Arnold

Lost without mother...

KEEPING THE HOME GOING during Mother's visit to relatives was a tricky job for Dad. What with darning, cooking—making young Bill wash those knees . . . phew! They were absolutely lost without Mother.

One Saturday, things came to a head. Dad got out Billy's best white shirt—ready for the school prize-giving on Monday. "Look at those cuffs—and that collar," he moaned, "the dirt is simply *ground* into them!"

So Dad set to work, scrubbing away like fifty thousand washerwomen. But could he get that shirt clean? Not a chance!

Then in came Mother unexpectedly—caught Dad mumbling terrible things at the sink. "Come on now," she smiled, "grumbling won't get the dirt out. But something else will. . . ."

"While I was away, Sis told me that Surf is especially made to boil spotless,". Mother said, "and that *is* news. Sis is such a Surf fan that she slipped me a packet before I left. Said I'd treasure it evermore."

Fast Worker! Mother rubbed some Surf suds well into the collar and cuffs. Then she popped the shirt into the copper with some other things Dad had forgotten. She let them boil for just ten minutes—no need to waste fuel.

Bright Boy! At school young Billy got his prize, and a special word for smartness, too! As his mother looked at his bright, *bright* shirt, she thought, "If I had my way Surf would get a prize as well. That shirt is spotless—truly *spotless!*"

Surf boils spotless!

NO NEED TO FIDDLE with different powders. Besides giving you a spotless boil and getting rid of stubborn stains, Surf washes greasy overalls, dungarees, coloureds, woollens spotless! Gets *everything* spotless!

A *LEVER* PRODUCT

SUR 72-80

EDITORIAL

Mr. Ostler finds out

INTO a cauliflower he was sending to market a couple of months ago, William Ostler of Barn Street Farm, St. Mary's Hoo, Kent, slipped a secret letter: "Will the housewife who buys this kindly write and inform me how much she paid?"

Back came a reply, from a housewife named Mrs. M. Nixon: "I paid a shilling in Brixton Road market."

Farmer Ostler had got 2½d. for it. By the time it reached the saucepan, its price was multiplied almost by five.

THIS is a moderate example of what happens to all fruit and vegetables. Brixton Market is one of the cheapest shopping places in London. If the cauliflower had gone on sale at a suburban shop, the price would probably have been at least one and sixpence.

MR. WILLIAM OSTLER
He wrote a secret letter

Mr. Ostler's average profit on a cauliflower is under three-farthings. When the grower's price recently dropped to a shilling for twenty-nine heads, he reluctantly ploughed in four acres of the sixty-seven he farms.

"The present marketing arrangements are unfair both to the grower and the housewife," he says. "She can't afford to buy and I can't afford to grow."

But the wholesalers and retailers have a good defence. They say that there is often great wastage in what they buy. There is little grading. And they have to stand the loss on produce which quickly goes bad.

WHO is the villain? He is not to be found in any one section of the trade, but in its whole structure—which is inefficient to the point of lunacy.

There are only six central markets. This frequently means, for instance, that runner beans grown in Cornwall are sent up to Covent Garden in the heart of London, hang about there for days, and are then sent down to Somerset to be sold—with tremendous added costs due to storage and transport.

About forty per cent of all produce going to London is redirected to other markets.

NEARLY all greengrocers are represented by the Retail Fruit Trade Federation, which has long recognized the chaos the trade is in. Its demand is for an immediate government inquiry into the facts, followed by a Commission with powers to end abuses.

This is more than a sensible suggestion. It *must* be acted upon. Otherwise there will be no end to the farce of ploughing into the soil the good food that housewives cannot afford to buy.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

"AN odd coincidence," says Charles Wood, "but, believe it or not, a real one." The mother and daughter are friends who came to tea with him. Afterwards they went for a walk in the fields adjoining his house in the old and picturesque village of Alfriston, near Eastbourne, Sussex. Wood's artistic eye was so struck by the similar markings on the skewbald mare and foal, and by the polka dotted skirts, that he just had to paint the attractive scene.

THEY SAID:–

"It's no good advertising The Observer in John Bull"

But we didn't agree. About five million people read John Bull and we know that more and more of them are also getting a lot of fun and interest out of *The Observer* on Sundays.

It's just the Sunday paper for people who want something more substantial than cheap sensations and trivial gossip—who want reliable reports and sensible comment on the real news of the world—who want to know which are the most interesting books, the most thrilling thrillers, what plays and films are worth seeing—who want a really knowledgeable summing up of the big sporting events of the week-end.

Above all, it's a Sunday paper that people can trust and respect, one that treats politics seriously and without party bias.

We believe that of the millions who like John Bull every week there are still thousands more who would enjoy *The Observer* on Sundays. Are we right? It will cost you threepence-halfpenny to find out. Ask your newsagent to keep you a copy.

THE 'SUNDAY' WITH A WAY OF ITS OWN

So now you have a dog...

. . . perhaps for the first time. You're delighted with the new member of the family, charmed at his winning ways. And, of course, you want to do your best for him.

You'll see he gets exercise, kindness, a good home . . . but you may suspect there's something else a dog needs if he's to look and feel at his absolute best.

And you're right! Bob Martin's supply the answer. Bob Martin's contain vitamins—vitamins A, B and D—plus all the concentrated goodness of whole natural liver. These are all essentials in a dog's truly *natural* diet. No wonder dogs love Bob Martin's.

So easy for you! So good for him!

Your dog will quickly learn to remind you when it's time for his Bob Martin's. Don't they taste good to him — and don't they do him good! Bob Martin time is a big moment in any dog's day.

Give him Bob Martin condition!

Bob Martin Condition Powder Tablets from chemists, pet shops and seedsmen 10d. and 2/-.

famous SINCE 1777

for lasting quality

Sherwoods Paints Ltd Barking Essex

FREE SPEECH

A dream goes into cold store

WHEN I was twenty-one, I received a surprise legacy of £100 from my grandfather on condition that I used it to tour Europe.

I had just taken a university degree, and was about to accept a a post in a research laboratory. But I did not hesitate. Two days later I caught a boat for France, even though the tour meant interrupting my career.

I spent nearly a year on the Continent, eking out my allowance by taking jobs where I could. It was such a wonderful experience that I determined, when my son was born, that he should have the same opportunity.

He is twenty-one this year, and will receive an endowment of £350. But he cannot spend it abroad, as was intended originally, because of currency restrictions.

We had hoped that by now there would have been sufficient relaxation in the regulations to allow him to go, particularly as in a case of this kind the money would really be spent on furthering his education. — DAVID GREENWELL, Bath.

Playing The Game

I WAS amused recently while listening to some children playing ball. As they played, they chanted in chorus and in time with the bounce of the ball: "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." I thought this was an interesting variation on the rhymes we chanted when I was young.—MRS. J. MECHULAM, Buchanan Road, Wallasey, Cheshire.

. . . The other day I heard some children playing a game to the accompaniment of this rhyme: "London County Council, L.C.C., London County Council, Out goes he."—J. STAINTON, Gladesmore Road, London, N.15.

Riding At Anchor

RECENTLY, I called on a retired seaman, and was surprised to see a butcher's hook hanging from his ceiling on a rope. He explained: "When I am ironing clothes I hang the iron on the hook. It never gets knocked over, and if I forget about it nothing will scorch." He thought of the idea at sea. On a rough day the iron would not stay on the board.—MISS EILEEN MCFAUL, Granville Drive, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim.

Orange Peril

HOWEVER soundly our cat sleeps it wakes immediately if an orange is peeled, and dashes madly about the room seeking shelter. Even if I am nursing her and she is purring happily, she becomes terrified if she smells an orange.—MRS. E. HEMLOCK, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey.

Cats are not allergic to oranges, but they have long memories, says Our Dumb Friends' League. Possibly, as a kitten, this cat had some unpleasant experience connected with an orange.

Diversion Ahead

WHEN my wife took her driving test recently, the examiner commented that she didn't seem very familiar with the gears. She explained that she had not driven the car before and that the gearbox was different. The examiner asked why she hadn't taken the test in the same car in which she had learnt to drive. My wife stopped the car, turned to the examiner with a look of surprise, and said: "Do you mean to tell me that this isn't *your* car?"

She had left the test centre with the examiner, who had walked to a car parked outside. My wife was under the misapprehension that she had to take the test in a car provided by the centre, and got in. Later she found the car belonged to another learner, who had arrived to take his test. Incidentally, she passed.—G. SLATER, Coventry Hall, Streatham, S.W.16.

Spot Of Irish

THERE are affinities between Northumberland dialect ("Free Speech," May 1) and that of Pembrokeshire, where there is also a strong Viking element. But the South Pembrokeshire dialect contains elements of Flemish, French, Welsh and Irish. I think it is one of the most amusing in Britain.

In Pembrokeshire, "Little England Beyond Wales," you are "naked" if you have left off your jacket; in the nude you are "bare naked." You don't bathe in the sea, you "wash in the tide." To "lock the door" merely means to shut it, but to "key the door" is to lock it. A disobedient child is a "cursed child," and a silly person invites the remark: "There's dull th' be."

A ditch is a "grip," a river or stream is a "lake," a rickyard is a "haggard," crayfish are "seagers," and winkles "crugglins." — P. HARRIS, Norbury Crescent, London, S.W.16.

Between Two Worlds

TWENTY-FIVE years ago I was governor of the Cathedral High School in Bombay and a manager of the Barnes schools in Byculla and Deolali. I have seen many young Anglo-Indians wearing their old school ties as proudly as Patrick Taylor wore the tie of St. Thomas's, Gondwara (*Bhowani Junction*, April 10).

John Masters has caught brilliantly the violent conflict of emotions of these people of two countries, two continents and two traditions. In my experience I soon saw the evil in the shabby lie that a mixed marriage must bring out the bad qualities of both races.

Some Anglo-Indian children were the most graceful I have ever seen. Mentally, they were often quick-witted beyond belief. All too soon, their happy schooldays gave way to

Continued on page 6

WHERE IS VINCENT J. FLAVIUS?

See page 24

Our happy family shoe shop

19/11
1394
In Brown

35/9
1408
In Brown

29/11
1409
In Brown

18/11
1002
In Black, Copper Rust, Buttercup Yellow, Beach Blue, or Wheat Linen

15/11
1000
In White or Beige

21/-
9843
In Black, Blue, Grey, Cherry, Stone, Saddle Tan, Primrose, also White Suede 22/9

26/9
8645
In Black, Brown, Blue, Grey, Cherry, or Saddle Tan also White Suede 29/11

36/9
5762
In Black or Beige

OUR HAPPY HOLIDAY SHOES

FROM
14/11

2518
In Tan 7-10 14/11, 11-1 16/11, 2-5 19/11

FROM
14/6

2519
In Tan 7-10 14/6, 11-1 16/6, 2-5 19/6

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FOR ENERGY AND PLEASURE

...you need

LUCOZADE

A healthy person should be able to get through a normal day's work and still arrive home with some energy to spare. Can *you?* If you can't . . . if your energy runs out too soon, have a glass of Lucozade—it will revive you quickly. Sparkling, delicious Lucozade contains energy-giving Glucose. When you burn up energy too fast, Lucozade will replace it. When you feel tired and jaded, Lucozade will revive you, stimulate your appetite and prevent you overtaxing your strength. In fact Lucozade can make such an important contribution to your general good health *and* to the health of your children that it's only commonsense to keep some by you—*always!*

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LUCOZADE

the sparkling GLUCOSE *drink*

REPLACES LOST ENERGY

LUCOZADE LTD., GREAT WEST ROAD, BRENTFORD, MIDDX. *royds 111*

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

a working world with the most unfair prejudices, where everything was done to accentuate their inferiority complex. An Anglo-Indian had to be of exceptionally strong character to make good.—J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON, Catsfield, Sussex.

"Bhowani Junction" is a Book Society Choice, Book of the Month Club selection in America, and South African Book Club Choice. It has been named by the "Evening Standard" and "Daily Mail" as their Book of the Month for May. Film rights have been bought by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. This week's instalment of "Bhowani Junction" begins on page 22.

Rabbit Food

WHILE serving with the R.A.F. in Holland, I had a strange experience which was recalled by your story of the home-robbing hedgehog ("Free Speech," April 24). We were living in tents on the outskirts of Apeldoorn, and found on several mornings that chocolate left on our lockers had been half eaten. I awoke early one morning to solve the mystery. A large rabbit was seated on my locker, blissfully munching my chocolate.—A. LAINCHBURY, Sussex.

Seeing Red

I WAS on night convoy duty with the army in Sussex in 1940. At that time our lorries had masked headlights and carried only a tiny red tail light. It was dark and raining, and I was surprised to see the red light ahead of me stop, rise about six feet, descend and carry on. I had been following a policeman on a bicycle. He had stopped to climb a stile. The rest of the convoy had turned off a quarter of a mile back.—W. A. JONES, Crosby Street, Derby.

Cover Girl

TWO weeks ago we bought a second-hand car with the registration plates CON 229. Imagine our surprise when it appeared in the cover drawing by Harry Zelinski (JOHN BULL, April 24) depicting a lady learner-driver in difficulty. I am hoping my husband

will teach me to drive and that I have the same luck as Mrs. Zelinski in passing the test first time.—MRS. B. S. REACH, Herschell Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

Artist Zelinski used his own car as a model for his cover drawing. He sold it recently to a Southend, Essex, dealer.

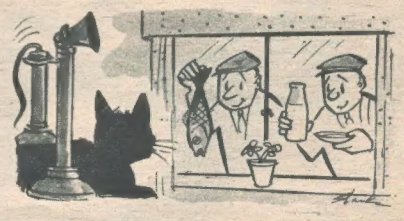
Dual Personality

SHORTLY after we married last November, both my husband and I received income tax rebates. My rebate of £12 was so unexpected that I made inquiries before spending the money to make sure that there had been no mistake. I was told by the income tax inspector that I had gained by marrying in November instead of waiting until just before the end of the tax year as many young couples do. Not only did I receive this rebate, but I paid little tax for the months I worked after our marriage.—MRS. J. ADAMS, Bristol.

A woman who continues working after her marriage is treated during the tax year as two entirely different people. On her earnings both before and after marriage she receives a full year's personal allowance. Thus if she earns £300 a year and marries on the last day of the tax year, she would pay £15 16s. 8d. tax. If she married half-way through the year she would pay nothing.

Purr-Purr

WHEN I was working as a telephone engineer, I was puzzled by an intermittent short circuit that developed in one line at about the same time each evening. It seemed that the receiver was being slowly raised and lowered, often for hours. Colleagues



called on the subscriber and, finding no one home, peered through the window. Beneath the instrument—an old candlestick type—a cat was dozing. As it breathed it raised the receiver enough to give a signal.—WILLIAM J. JONES, Parkside Avenue, Romford, Essex.

Poacher's Pride

LAST week I was cycling past a field when I saw a rabbit bobbing along near the hedge. It seemed to be going so slowly that I realized something was wrong. Then, a few yards behind, I noticed a stoat. I cycled on, and suddenly heard something squealing in the road behind me. I turned to see the stoat killing the rabbit. As I cycled towards them the stoat ran off, leaving the rabbit dead in the road. When I took it to the farm where I was staying, the farmer commented that I should have given the stoat a bowl of milk, as the poachers do. It would then have caught a rabbit for me every day.—J. SUMMERS, Norfolk.

Cold Comforts

A FEW days ago, I came across a seven-year-old boy shivering in the school playground at 8.30 in the morning. He told me that his home had been locked up by his sixteen-year-old sister when she left for work. His parents had both left at a quarter to seven, as they worked from seven till five. The boy stays at school for dinner; the rest of the family eat in canteens. No fire is lit in the house until tea-time, and after a quick meal the mother and father get busy on the chores. They have a television set, and the boy goes to the pictures one evening a week and twice on Saturday. He gets four shillings a week to spend.—F. M., Yorkshire.

Six-day Week

ON a Scottish tour last summer my wife and I decided to spend a Sunday night in a west coast village. The hotel had no rooms and several houses advertising accommodation said they were full. An English couple offered us a room. They said: "Visitors are often turned away on Sundays. Boarding houses won't take in guests on the Sabbath." — J. BARNES, Bournemouth.

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed, and at usual rates for readers' photographs. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

BECAUSE *this brush is more than a toothbrush*

-IT DOES A DOUBLE DUTY

ASK FOR THE HALEX DOUBLE-DUTY if you really treasure your teeth. For this is more—much more—than a toothbrush. Designed by dentists, it is like no other toothbrush you have met. It looks different, feels different and works differently, guarding your mouth as never before. For years dentists have wanted a finer, safer type of nylon for toothbrushes. Finer, to protect your tooth-enamel. Finer, to let you brush your gums in comfort and in safety. Now Halex have found it! The new fine-gauge nylon is all that dentists desire, and as well as being "Rondated" at the tips for extra safety, it is a special long-life nylon to give your new Halex Double-Duty a double lease of life.

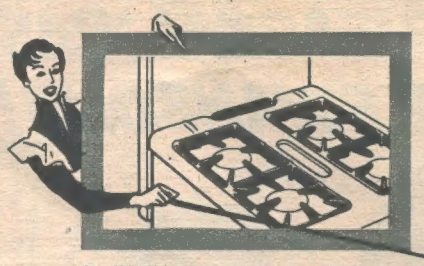
See this ultra-modern brush today! See the hygienic bubble-pack with the green label and the words *"HALEX DOUBLE-DUTY"*.

HALEX
DOUBLE-DUTY

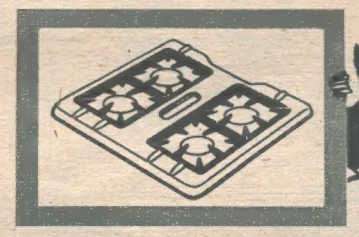
2/-

★ *This is but one in a splendid variety of Halex Brushes at most moderate prices. When you are buying it ask to see a Halex Nailbrush and some of the fine Halex Hairbrushes for men, women and children.*

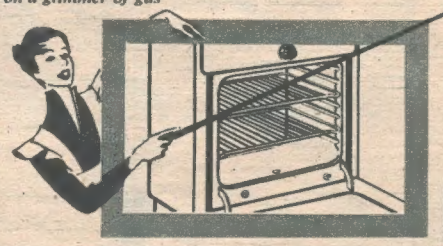
A Main to conjure with!



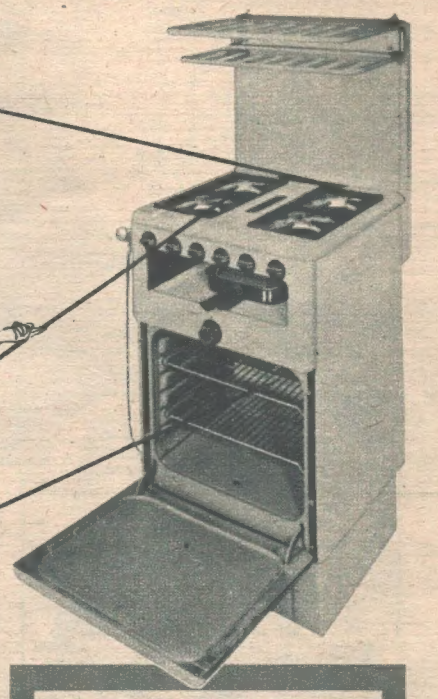
Sensible Vent *brings oven heat* in front *of splash plate, so it heats the platerack and doesn't stain the kitchen wall*



Turnabout *Pot supports are interchangeable, left to right, back to front. All four burners give full-speed boiling—or simmer on a glimmer of gas*



Masses of room *in the family size oven. You can stand slow-cooking dishes on the floor of the oven itself*



Less work, less gas and heavenly cooking—that's the joy of the Main Century. This smart cream-enamel cooker is planned in detail for looks, for performance. But then it's a Main so you expect refinements

Note the name made by MAIN

THE MAIN No. 20
CENTURY
GAS COOKER

See it at your gas showrooms.
If you cook on gas you must have THE MAIN COOKERY BOOK. Over 750 recipes. 5/- post free from **Dept J.B. R & A Main Ltd 48 Grosvenor Gardens London, SW1**

Buy also your choc-bars, cups and family packs where you see this sign—the sign of pure and delicious ice cream

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At ease with 'Threes'

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STATE EXPRESS
'THREE THREES'
CIGARETTES

OUR FIRST REHEARSAL WAS NEARLY MY SWANSONG!

SORRY STEVE—I CAN'T PLAY THIS LEAD FOR YOU—UNLESS YOU REPLACE HER. I LIKE HER VOICE BUT NOT HER—HER BREATH!
GIVE HER A CHANCE RAY—THIS IS HER FIRST BIG BREAK. I'LL GET HER TO SEE HER DENTIST.
JUST ONE BRUSHING WITH COLGATE'S REMOVES UP TO 85% OF THE BACTERIA THAT CAUSE BAD BREATH! SCIENTIFIC TESTS PROVE THAT COLGATE'S INSTANTLY STOPS BAD BREATH IN 7 OUT OF 10 CASES THAT ORIGINATE IN THE MOUTH!
JUST ONE BRUSHING WITH COLGATE'S REMOVES UP TO 85% OF DECAY-CAUSING BACTERIA! AND IF YOU REALLY WANT TO PREVENT TOOTH DECAY, BE SURE TO FOLLOW THE COLGATE WAY OF BRUSHING TEETH DIRECTLY AFTER EATING
LATER—Thanks to Colgate Dental Cream
THE AUDIENCE LOVED US—RAY LOVES ME! HOW HELPFUL COLGATE CARE CAN BE!

Now! ONE Brushing With COLGATE DENTAL CREAM Removes Up To 85% Of Odour- And Decay-Causing Bacteria!

Only The Colgate Way Does All Three!
CLEANS YOUR BREATH while it
CLEANS YOUR TEETH and
STOPS MOST TOOTH DECAY!

10½d. 1/7. 2/5 and 3/4

GIVES YOU A SWEETER, FRESHER MOUTH ALL DAY LONG!

Hair looks best when you check DRY SCALP

You can't look your best when you have Dry Scalp—dry, scruffy, unmanageable hair that won't stay put. So smarten up. Start to check Dry Scalp now—this sure way. It's easy!

Gently massage a few drops of 'Vaseline' Brand Hair Tonic into the scalp every morning for 20 seconds. This supplements natural scalp oils, makes a big improvement.

'Vaseline' Hair Tonic used regularly soon checks Dry Scalp. Hair looks naturally healthy, stays well-groomed all day. Look your best. Use 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic. It costs only 2/6, or 3/9 for double the quantity. Get a bottle today.

Vaseline* HAIR TONIC

The dressing that checks Dry Scalp

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ALABASTINE

First things first. Make sure all cracks and crevices are filled with ALABASTINE. It makes all surfaces, walls, ceilings and woodwork perfect for decorating. Used by professional craftsmen for over 50 years—it is the ideal filler for the handyman. 1/3 lb. packet.

FREE! Send for booklet "Repairing and Decorating" containing many useful hints on the uses of Alabastine.

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A TOMB FOR KARMESIN

by GERALD KERSH

For centuries the tomb had stayed undisturbed. Karmesin wanted it for only one night

KARMESIN'S MOUSTACHE HAS always fascinated me. It is full of zoological interest; it appears to live a life of its own. When I first met him twenty-five years ago, it resembled a hibernating squirrel. Ten years later, it had turned into a dying racoon. And now it was a grey-backed gull seeking refuge from a storm under the jutting crag of his formidable nose, so that as his cigarette burned down low I half expected it to fly away with a terrified squawk. But he rescued it in the nick of time, dropped the glowing stub into the dregs of his coffee cup, and gave it a reassuring pat.

He caught my glance—Karmesin missed nothing—and said: "Yes, old boy, it has gone white. It grew out white after I shaved it off in 1923."

"For a disguise?" I asked.

"Well, to lay the foundations for one. Ah, that was an affair! The world has never seen the like of it, and never will again!"

Now Karmesin is an enigma. In all the years I have known him, I have never been able to decide whether he is the greatest criminal, or the greatest liar, the world has ever known. Either way, he is great. He has his facts at his fingertips—the unlikeliest facts. He never contradicts himself, and when he falls into a reminiscent mood he casts such a spell upon you by a kind of sleight-of-mind that, while he talks, you must believe . . . He is the conjurer and you, the child at the party when, in the dimmed light, the bowl of gold-fish comes out of the hat. And you go away saying to yourself: *It must be a lie. . . . Or was it?*

"Tell me about it," I said.

With heavy sarcasm, he said: "There is no earthly use telling you anything, you. You never believe me. You are one of those fools that call themselves 'sceptics,' and 'hard-headed,' etcetera, etcetera. And what fools you turn out to be in your misbelief! You will believe in Signor Ponzi's gold, or Ivar Kreugar's mad promises, far more sincerely than you believe in God. That is why the easiest money I have ever made has been by picking out the shrewdest sceptic I could find."

"Oh, Karmesin!" I begged.

"I will tell you, briefly," said Karmesin with

The workmen stared; I held my breath. "Who's he, Jack?" one of them said. "Never noticed that image before. It ain't even life-like"

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

For such a crime, I wanted money in advance. I haggled and argued. Finally, Mr. Three gave way

a chuckle, "just in order to shock you. . . ."

Oh, if I could convey to you that sonorous, steady, insistent, hypnotic voice of Karmesin's when he began to talk, gazing straight in front of him! And his eyes. You have seen one of those ancient portraits in which the subject, looking at nothing, appears from every angle to be watching you? Such were the eyes of Karmesin, as he told his story. . . .

I AM that rare combination, a thinker and a man of action (Karmesin began). Therefore, it has been possible for me, in the course of a long life devoted almost exclusively to robbery in most of its forms, to conceive and execute some of the most sensational coups in the history of crime. But what I am going to tell you constitutes the history of, perhaps, the most audacious and spectacular robbery of all time.

It also involves a discovery which, if published, would shake the world. It would drive news of a world catastrophe on to Page Three. And as for the loot, well, the man who had that in his pocket—if he had come by it honestly—could command anything. Magnates would cry for it; nations would bid for it; treasuries would be ransacked for the purchase of it—if it had been honestly come by. Even now, hundreds of thousands would be paid for the return of it, if only one knew where to find it. And believe me, it is hard to find, because it is nothing but a tattered scrap of half-rotten vellum that you could cover with one hand, scribbled with seventy-five broken words on one side, and some crabbed dog-Latin on the other. I was paid two million dollars for stealing it.

You want to know who paid me two million dollars, and for exactly what? Aha, my boy, here we come to the privileged classes, the higher ups! I may not mention real names for fear that you might repeat them to your own destruction—for I, most certainly, on inquiry would deny all knowledge of this affair.

There are, as you must know, dynasties of dollars: Hamburger II, Limburger IV, Van Elbow VI, and so on. All right, my pay came from a hereditary magnate of the third generation whom I will call Mr. Three.

His grandfather was a species of Dr. Moriarty of high finance . . . a sort of arachnid in a tenuous web. He begot a son, who was the worst of the lot, and so the fortune descended to Mr. Three. Now there—God save the Queen!—there was a strange one. Although he had been brought up to great expectations, he had been grudgingly shoved through college until, having acquired a master's degree in the arts, he became a teacher. Brother, I have studied under hard masters, but the Lord preserve me from such a one as Three must have been! I have some little experience of him. He was a spy, a watcher-by-night, a pedant of the most learned sort. There was no way of having Mr. Three.

I was introduced to him by a man named Sweetbread, and this man was, in his way, one of the most sinister characters I have ever encountered. He was an agent for Mr. Three.

But before I go on: another word about Mr. Three. He had a hundred million dollars, but lived at the rate of about twelve dollars a week in a brownstone house that might have been magnificent if he had kept it clean.

He did not smoke: for him tobacco was dust and ashes, catarrh and halitosis—and so many dollars chucked into the ashtrays. He informed me, with some severity, that the stump of a Corona-Corona which, in a moment of impatience, I discarded in his presence, was in point of fact worth five dollars and seven cents, if I counted taxes.

Alcohol he abhorred, clothes he regarded as vanity; he went about shabby as only a multi-millionaire dare afford to be. As for women: Mr. Three was afraid of them.

MR. THREE, born a millionaire and a miser, became a collector. It is the same thing, in effect. As a numismatist collects gold coins because they are old or *recherché*, so any other kind of collector, turning specie into the worth of it, gathers and grasps—whether it be metal or stone, or (which is most valuable) paper in the form of books, etchings, stamps and what-not.

In point of fact, these wretches of collectors are worse than penurious. Your common or garden miser grabs hard cash, and holds it until God strikes him dead. He deals only in dirty money. But your collector of the fine arts makes blind alleys into which run the works of great men. I could always rob such types with an easy conscience.

However, much as I hated and despised Mr. Three for his vile greed, I detested Sweetbread even more. He was an M.A., an Oxford man; something of a lecturer; a bit of a critic; an eccentric. Oh, what a repulsive man he was, with his greenish fish-belly face, and his horrid, fruity, liver-coloured mouth that was never quite wet or dry, and made a tiny, sticky, smacking sound every time it opened!

Yet a scholar, mark you, a man of erudition!

Tortuous in his ways, serpentine in his means, armed with one of the best brains in England, Sweetbread went in pursuit of that which was out of the way. His was a clammy passion, a grave-robber's love for what lay buried; a desire to disturb that which was supposed to be at rest.

Now one evening, he came to me and said: "M. Karmesin, would you be interested in a million dollars or so?"

"Perhaps," I said.

"I have a billionaire," said Sweetbread, "ripe for a bite."

"Oh?"

"It is legitimate," Sweetbread said, using sporting jargon, which came unpleasantly out of his mouth. "Play or pay. Deliver or nothing. You understand? Only out of the grand total, I must have one-quarter, which might run as high as half a million dollars."

"Aie, aie, aie!" I said. "Here, in effect, is a bite!"

"Indeed," said Sweetbread. "The bite of bites! Better meet my principal."

And so I did.

Mr. Three said to Sweetbread: "You have, no doubt, explained the matter to this gentleman?"

"No, Mr. Three, I have not," said Sweetbread. "Not without your permission. It is a delicate matter, I think."

"Then I will thank you kindly to explain," said Mr. Three. At this point, Sweetbread became academic. He gave me an interesting mixture of fact and conjecture, the gist of which was as follows:

THE poet, Edmund Spenser, died in 1599, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Now as far as I am concerned, the author of *The Faerie Queen* is one of the most ponderous and prodigious bores in Elizabethan literature. Yet he earned the affection of his Queen, and therefore received certain outward signs of respect from his betters. So, when Edmund Spenser died, there was a show of grief.

When he was buried, the greatest of his contemporaries wrote poems to throw into his grave. And, when I give you their names, you will observe that in the grave of Edmund Spenser were buried manuscripts more precious than the Codex Siniaticus.

There were present Michael Drayton, Thomas Nashe, John Donne, Ben Jonson, and William Shakespeare. Every one of these great Elizabethans cast into Spenser's grave a poem specially written for the occasion of his burial.

William Shakespeare was thirty-five years old at the time, and engaged upon a pot-boiler entitled *Much Ado About Nothing*. He was in the middle of it when Edmund Spenser had to come home from Ireland and die!

Sweetbread said that, according to his conjecture, it was Michael Drayton — a gentle, sentimental little busybody of a minor poet—who went bursting about London, collaring the greatest literary figures of the time and, with womanish persistence, nagging and worrying them away from their business until they wrote mourning verses to be dropped with a decent show of grief into old Edmund Spenser's coffin.

That the poets I have mentioned finally did

Continued on page 32

Fire—a nightmare for Forester Tribe

by JACK ATACK

One spark may turn acres of his woodland into raging flame; a plume of smoke is a threat he dare not ignore. So he watches and waits—for the next heedless fire-raiser to drop a match

WHILE HE WAS phoning a routine report to the district forest officer one warm April afternoon a few years ago, William Tribe saw smoke rising from Shoal Hill, two miles away. Tribe, who had just reported his area safe, rang off and took a closer look from the window of his house, which overlooks the valley. Flames were leaping in the air as the fire came up over the hill. Rapidly calculating the help he would need, Tribe phoned the Rugeley and Cannock fire brigades and sent sixteen of his own men to the blaze.

When he arrived, Tribe saw that the fire was burning alongside a narrow clearing. It would jump the gap and spread to another plantation if it were not isolated quickly. He ordered the fire brigades to break the spearhead with their hoses. Then, with his own men, he started beating out the flanks with birch brooms. A stiff south wind whipped up the flames, but Tribe and his men worked steadily. Within an hour the fire was confined to a single block, and Tribe reported back to the district officer that the danger was over.

At any time, fire is liable to break out at Cannock Chase Forest in Staffordshire; when it does, Tribe, a sharp-eyed, sixty-one year old southerner, has to make prompt decisions. When he was called to an outbreak in the Sherbrook valley area several years ago, Tribe saw that two of his men had panicked and were fighting the fire from the side. A forty mile an hour wind was carrying the blaze up a hill. He ordered his men to the front, but it was too late. "Their mistake," he says, "cost us twenty-five acres."

£100,000 Havoc In Five Years

Fire is the gravest and most constant threat to British woodlands. During five recent years, 3,123 separate forest fires destroyed 4,096 acres of forest, and cost the nation £100,000. Last summer, two fires alone did damage estimated at £13,500.

Tribe is in charge of 6,316 acres of forest at Cannock Chase, which has one of the highest fire rates in England. During his fifteen years as head forester he has fought about 138 major fires. "The conditions," he says, "could hardly be more ideal for a blaze." Trees, chiefly larch, spruce and pine, grow on a sand and gravel bed and are surrounded by dry clumps of gorse, heather and bracken. The rainfall is low, averaging thirty inches a year.

Wind is the fire-fighter's chief enemy. The slightest change can spread fires in unexpected

Birch brooms and water quickly isolate a small fire. Tribe, directing operations in the foreground, acts quickly to avoid a costly disaster

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

William Tribe tours the forest regularly, watching for anything that may cause a fire. "The most dangerous time is the evening," he says. "That's when the campers light their stoves"

directions and put firemen in peril of their lives. Once, a burst of wind carried a fire along at such a pace that it overcame the fire brigade and burned two complete lengths of hose. On another occasion, the only way to reach a fire on the Penkridge bank of the forest was to approach by way of a thirty-foot clearing that came to a dead end.

"We decided to risk it," Tribe says. "But when we reached the fire, the wind changed and whipped the flames across the clearing behind us. We headed back smartly and had to fight it with brooms."

When a forest fire has been quelled, Tribe has to watch closely in case it flares up again. After he had trapped a blaze at a narrow point in one plantation, he thought the danger was over. He was leaving when he noticed a column of smoke rising thirty yards inside another plantation across a clearing. "We cut our way in and found a second fire burning in a small ring," he says. "The top of one blazing tree had snapped off and had been blown across the clearing."

Fought Outbreak Three Times

Tribe knows that most fires can be stubborn. Several years ago, after a fire which destroyed twenty-six acres of the Chase was put out, the peat bed was still smouldering, but no guard was left to watch it. Towards evening, a fresh wind fanned the peat and started the fire again. "Another hundred acres were lost," says Tribe.

He fought one fire three times before it was quelled. "A stretch had been burned out during the day so that new trees could be planted. When I looked out of the window at night I saw that it had flared up again. I beat it out with a birch broom, but four hours later it started all over again. After beating it out a third time, I stood by and watched it all night."

At times Tribe feels that he is fighting a losing battle. In 1937, fire destroyed 220 acres of Parr's Warren, a stretch of forest popular with picnic parties and trippers. Two years later, Tribe supervised the replanting of the scorched ground. In 1946, three separate fires destroyed another fifty-three acres of the same area, and Tribe had to replant it again. Since then, small fires have destroyed more patches.

To fight forest fire, Tribe and his fifty-five foresters use birch brooms and slashers. The slashers are used to lop off the lower six feet of branches so that brooms can be wielded freely. One line of men beat quickly for two minutes, then step back to let another line take over.

To prevent fires at Cannock Chase, Tribe has broken up compartments of woodland into smaller areas divided by thirty-foot wide rides. Twelve-foot trenches have been bulldozed round dangerous areas. He has planted beech and birch trees as fire-breaks along main roads, built static water tanks, and improved co-operation with local fire brigades. Lorries loaded with water and motor pumps stand by at danger points, and spotters on top of an eighty-foot fire tower notify outbreaks by telephone.

After a fire, Tribe sees that birch brooms are renewed and water tanks replenished. He also keeps a small guard at the dangerous area. Once every fortnight he makes a tour of the forest. "The worst periods," he says, "are from February to June, and the most dangerous time is from four to six in the evening. That's when campers light their stoves."

Frequently, Tribe has trouble in reaching outbreaks. To get to one he had to make a complete circle of the forest. When fire broke out in an area that could be reached only by narrow paths, he had to crash through in his car, badly denting it. Once, a fire truck bogged down on a wet ride after it sunk to its axles in mud. Some fires have been put out within twenty minutes, but one lasted two days, and more than a hundred tons of water had to be used to put it out.

Because Tribe has to act quickly, he has often been caught by fire false alarms. Colliery smoke, similar in colour to smoke from a burning forest, has given him trouble. Recently he hurried to one valley only to discover that a farmer was burning rubbish and had failed to warn him.

As head forester at Cannock, Tribe may be called at any time. Once, when flares dropped for bombing practice went off course and started a series of fires, he was kept working all night. On his way to the first flare, Tribe saw a glimmer through the trees and discovered a two-acre area in flames. While he was fighting it with a squad of men, another flare was dropped two hundred yards away. He had no sooner put it out than two more flares were dropped, starting fires. "By the time we reached the first outbreak, we were dizzy."

Tribe has scorched his hair and singed his eyebrows, and frequently patches of his clothes have been burned. Once he was nearly killed. A spurt of flame shot straight at him, and in stepping back to avoid it he tripped over a tree stump and lay dazed as the fire burned around him. "Fortunately, I was dragged clear by two foresters who were standing nearby."

Tribe has been lost after quelling night fires. He was wandering around in search of a landmark once when he fell headlong into a drain filled with three feet of water. On another occasion he was more pleased to find a drain. "I had been lost," he says, "but by following the drain for several miles I was able to find my way back."

In replanting a burned-out area, Tribe has to let it settle for a period of two years. He then pulls out the bracken and heather and plants the small trees. Because the burned-out area is ideal for insects, traps are laid to catch pine weevil beetles.

Rain Storm Smothered Flames

On rare occasions, Tribe has been helped by the weather in quelling forest fire. After 120 acres of heather went up on a piece of common land adjacent to one of his plantations, he stood by with thirty men and two fire services. "It was within one hundred yards of the forest when a rain storm broke and blotted it out completely."

When forest fires get out of control, the forestry service and local fire brigades may have to call in extra help. Arriving at an outbreak on the west side of the forest several years ago, James Woodman, chief of the Rugeley fire brigade, saw that he could do nothing with a single truck and his small crew of seven men.

"A solid wall of flame over a mile long was consuming everything in view," he says. "I had to phone the barracks at Lichfield and ask for the help of troops. Two hundred arrived in lorries, and worked through the night until noon the next day. More than four hundred thousand trees were destroyed."

William Tribe comes from a hardy Sussex family of fire-fighters. His father and grandfather were both foresters on private estates. In 1926 he joined the Forestry Commission and was stationed at forests in Lincolnshire and Suffolk before he came to Cannock Chase in 1939, where he was made head forester. As well as fire-fighting, his duties include planting, tending, thinning, draining, cultivation and timber sales.

Public Are Worst Culprits

Though most fires are started by the general public, Tribe has had to fight fires started in other ways. Crashing aircraft carved out two chunks of forest, and sparks from a mineral train without spark traps caused one fire.

After each outbreak, Tribe searches for clues that may betray the cause of the fire. They may range from overturned primus stoves to charred cigarette packages and match boxes. Once a fire started when slack from a colliery was exposed to the air and flared up. In cases where the origin of the fire is known, Tribe may claim for damages.

Sometimes the job calls for cunning. When an outbreak was reported at the back of one man's house, Tribe was suspicious. He paid the man the normal fee for fire-fighting. But the following year another fire started in the same place. After the fourth year—and the fourth blaze—Tribe refused to pay the man. "Since then," he says, "the area has been completely free of fire." THE END

Letters to a lady in love

by ***LYN ARNOLD***

ILLUSTRATED BY KOOLMAN

Week after week, month after month, they arrived. But the one she wanted most, and longed for with all her heart, had yet to come

THE YOUNG MAN met the eyes of the very old lady. Each of them, smiling delightfully, shaking hands, metaphorically sniffed the air as a seasoned warhorse sniffs gunpowder on the eve of battle.

George Fawcett took the proffered chair opposite Miss Arbuthnot's own, on the other side of the black-leaded basket-grate, and laid down his gloves and black Homburg hat. He refused a cigarette—from a box which, surprisingly, when his hostess lifted the lid, played "The Bluebells of Scotland"—and, continuing his delightful smile, made his usual swift calculations.

Though adept at social arithmetic, he could not entirely square Miss Arbuthnot's distinctly unfashionable address with her Queen Anne escritoire, the Aubusson rugs, and the few good pictures.

Though skilled, he believed, in personal summings-up, he was still uncertain which to believe: the worldliness of her porcelain-painted face and blue eyes, and the very expensive French scent, or the Cranford touch supplied by spun-sugar hair, the lace ruffles at neck and wrist of her greening dress of black watered silk.

Miss Arbuthnot, meanwhile, observing the young man—narrow blond head, high arched nose, chiselled lips beneath a gold brush of moustache, his tall figure faultlessly tailored—now observed herself observed.

Mr. Fawcett leaned forward. "It was," he said, "so exceedingly good of you to make time to see me."

"Not at all! I have got to the age when a break in my day is a boon. When the entertaining, even to afternoon tea, of a strange young man, has become an event. Of such magnitude, it seems, that I find myself waiting, all ready dressed, twenty minutes before he can possibly arrive. . . ."

"That cannot have happened many times in your life. If ever before! And dressed—so enchantingly, may I say?"

Miss Arbuthnot bent to light the spirit lamp on the tea-tray at her side. It had crossed her mind that the tug-of-war which ensues when Greek meets Greek is a bagatelle compared with the tug-of-wits taking place when a professional charmer is met by professional charm.

"May I come to the point at once?" Mr. Fawcett's smile was boyish, disarming, frank. "So far as you are concerned I am . . . what you

The stage manager stopped shouting. "What is the matter?" She looked away. "Nothing." But there was—the letter had no word of love in it

said, an—er—strange young man. You know nothing more about me than the facts I gave—and I purposely kept these brief—in my letter requesting this interview."

"Nothing more," Miss Arbuthnot agreed, "than what I read there: that you're writing a life of the late Sir Andrew Hetherington, D.S.O., M.C.—I forget the rest; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, formerly Ambassador in Washington, in Paris, and in Lisbon, Minister Plenipotentiary in Tehran, and so on . . . to whom, for the past five years, you have acted as private secretary."

Mr. Fawcett smoothed his fair moustache. "You have every word at your fingertips."

"Yes—I'm still a quick study, it appears!"

"How I wish I had seen you act. . . ."

"How I wish you had. . . ."

"Sir Andrew was," Mr. Fawcett now announced, "as you know, all his life a prolific letter writer. He also kept an almost uninterrupted set of personal journals, day by day. This of course to a great extent simplifies my task; and during the five years I worked for him, he employed his few leisure times in enlarging, embellishing, so to speak, the more interesting and significant events of his long career."

"He engaged you with this in view?"

"Possibly. Perhaps. . . . In the whole of his adult life," Mr. Fawcett bore on, "there is only one blank. For the year 1900-1901, when Sir Andrew, a very young man, was Third Secretary to the Ambassador at Pintore, no journal exists. Any letters he may have written have not been retrieved. It was during that year, of course, that the incidents at Pintore, subsequently known as the Guampala Affair, took place. A Government White Paper, published soon afterwards, gave the facts. It was generally held that the truth behind those facts could not then be told. Conjecture, I understand, at the time ran high; the affair was, one might say, endlessly discussed. Controversy has not since died. Perhaps half a dozen people in all knew the truth."

"And Andrew was one?"

"The only surviving one. The one who knew more, I believe, than anyone else. . . ."

"Please go on."

"Conditions at Pintore were at that time so primitive that no document not carried permanently next one's skin was considered safe. The Ambassador warned his staff: no facts to be set to paper, all letters home to be placed in the diplomatic bag. Sir Andrew, therefore, during the fateful months, noted down in his diary only such events as . . . played polo, dined, rode, danced. When I pointed this out to him, he seemed . . . what shall I say. . . ?"

"Put out?" Miss Arbuthnot prompted him.

THE young man met innocently inquiring eyes. "Sufficiently—agitated, shall we say, for me to postpone, for the time at least, pressing him for facts. I merely remarked that, as all the protagonists, so to speak, in the famous Guampala Affair were now dead—all except Sir Andrew, that is—the truth could be told. He agreed. That had been his intention for fifty years, he said. That was all he said. . . .

"Shortly after, he flew to the States. Though no longer young, he had always appeared in amazing health. It came as a shock to us—one might almost say a shattering surprise—when he died. You know, of course, that he died in his sleep?"

"Yes. Poor Andrew! He wouldn't have liked that. With no death-bed scene. Though—a good way to die. . . ."

"It remains for me to unearth the facts. I have contacted, with Lady Hetherington's help, every friend and acquaintance he had at that time, without luck. And no letters have so far come to light. Lady Hetherington, of course, was herself in the schoolroom then——"

"Only d. of the seventh Duke," Miss Arbuthnot supplied. "Educated privately, and in Paris . . . or was it Rome? I can't recollect, though I did in fact look it up in *Who's Who* at the time of the marriage."

"In his diary for the previous year," Mr. Fawcett pursued, "references were made to a lady: yourself. Made sufficiently often for me to hope that perhaps he wrote to you in that year? Lady Hetherington, too, thought as much. I am here today, naturally, with her full consent——"

"Oh, but naturally!"

Miss Arbuthnot turned, took the now-boiling kettle in her hand, poured the water into a fluted silver pot.

"He did write to you?" Mr. Fawcett asked.

"Oh yes." Miss Arbuthnot did not look up.

"Mentioning the Guampala Affair?"

"Oh yes."

"In some detail? He wrote to you . . . frequently, one might say?"

Miss Arbuthnot raised her head. "Yes, indeed. In just over six months . . . let me see, let me get this right, very nearly—not quite—two hundred times!"

MR. FAWCETT did not speak. Miss Arbuthnot poured out. "Sugar? Milk? Neither? Something to eat, perhaps? No?" She herself raised her Coalport cup and drank. "I assume you imagine that I can help with this book of yours?"

"But 'imagine' is surely not the word?"

"That remains to be seen. What I know, what you want to know, may be two different things."

"The biographer's task is to seek out the truth."

"Oh, to seek it—yes. But when the truth is found (if indeed truth ever is) to select; discard; expand or contract; to colour or dim. There surely, or am I wrong, lies the task, shall we say the art, of the good biographer?"

Mr. Fawcett's well-cut nostrils flared as he breathed, hard, through his nose.

"How like Andrew you are!" Miss Arbuthnot sighed. "How like Andrew—that is, when I knew him first, long ago when he was young. Not so much in looks, but in gesture, expression, the way you speak, what you say. . . . Have you noticed how certain men seem to gather about them their own types?"

Mr. Fawcett had not; but it was, he allowed, a most interesting idea. However, that being so, could they now—er—get down to work?

"But of course!" Miss Arbuthnot smiled, and drank more tea, her old eyes above the raised cup's rim soft yet bright, alert yet withdrawn. "You want me to tell you what happened then? That is why you're here? I'd imagined so. For the last few days I've cast back my mind, I've collected thoughts, I have been . . . remembering. . . .

"In the year 1898," she went on after a little pause, "my mother died. In the year 1899, with her little legacy, I ran away from a good safe home—from a country parsonage, in fact—to go on the stage. I pulled down a job in the chorus—*not* the front row—of a musical show that became the rage of town.

"My relations were appalled. There were scenes, there were tears—though not from me. What more could they do, poor dears, than storm? I was independent, of age, and—I see it now—quite deplorably self-willed. For years I'd been bored to the marrow of my bones. But not any more! I had found my vocation in the stage.

"My show came to an end. As a last attempt, perhaps, to snatch from the burning her sister's child, my Aunt Rose—rather higher up in the social scale than I was myself, though not flying quite so high as the highest in the land—my Aunt Rose, who'd once promised me a stay in town, when her daughters, of course, were married off, now invited me to a little dance.

"My position was unique. No one here would have thought to drink champagne from my tiny shoe—size three. Yet in fact I was

This was what she'd prayed for. All night he'd

what all the young men wished to seek at so many stage doors. No one knew, officially, who I was. No one failed, in fact, to know.

"Five minutes of maiden modesty—strategically placed on a small gilt chair underneath a potted palm, my lashes cast down, and dressed in pale-blue faille trimmed with blush-pink rosebud wreaths—five minutes of acting, assiduously, this part, and my programme was full. Only one young man did not seek to write his name against one of the fast-disappearing blanks. That name, which I did not know, but which you have guessed, was, of course, Andrew Hetherington. . . .

"He was very tall," Miss Arbuthnot said. "He was very fair. Underneath a sovereign-gold moustache showed a firm young mouth. All that night he watched me, over the dancers' heads. All that night I watched him, as we turned and twirled. He did not smile. As for me, I had known at once: if he did not speak to me, I should die. . . .

"He did speak to me. I lived! When I'd almost given up hope, when the music had already started for the last dance, Andrew came to my side and bowed.

"Andrew danced well, of course, as he did all

watched her over the dancers' heads. When she'd almost given up hope, he came to her and bowed

things; skilfully, correctly, efficiently. A little stiffly, perhaps—but what did I care? It was enough to be in his arms, held so properly at a little distance, of course; but even so, next his heart.

"I did not sleep all that night; and next morning, as early as was even remotely permissible, I called on my aunt.

"In those days, Mr. Fawcett, we were adept at having conversations that did not once mention the matter in hand. Without actually saying so, I let it be understood, quite untruthfully, that I was now willing to give up my wicked, wilful ways: the stage. That I wanted to marry Andrew—oh, yes, I knew, even then. That Andrew was not, after all, a good catch. (In the eyes of the world, at that time, he was not.) That none of my rather plain and, I fear, quite unenchanting cousins could possibly want him. That men being like bees round a honey-pot—where one buzzes, others follow—I should not be altogether a dead loss. That I could, perhaps, teach Millicent, Avis, Cecilia . . . how to enchant. . . .

"In a little less than an hour—how I regretted that Andrew could not see me! It was, if I say it myself, a superb performance, a perfect piece of diplomacy—my Aunt Rose had offered me half of a large feather bed in Cecilia's room."

Miss Arbuthnot laughed in soft reminiscence. "London in Maytime is a fairy-tale city. It is still a little like that, even now; you cannot imagine how it was then. I met Andrew in the Park, at the British Museum; I saw him at tea-parties and dinner-parties and little dances. I showed him Aunt Rose's garden—many times; there were Japanese lanterns there, once, for a dance, when we sat out.

"All that time, that wonderful summer, Andrew talked to me of his career. There was not an if or a but or a maybe in his mind; it was always when. And indeed the story that you are going to write, Mr. Fawcett, will be word for word, almost, the story he then told me. His foot was still on the very bottom rung of the ladder of success, and at that insecurely. He never doubted, and nor did I, that he'd get to the top.

"After a while it bore in on me that Andrew was . . . looking me over," Miss Arbuthnot said. "Just that. I did not mind. Peers could afford, perhaps, to marry actresses. Andrew was not a peer. His marriage must be the right one. My disadvantages as a wife Andrew had seen, I knew, from the beginning; now he considered my —possibilities. I was a lady. I had a little money —oh yes, I let him know this, quite shamelessly. And—I could act.

"Andrew, of course, did not put a name to this . . . gift of mine. I was clear-sighted. On stage, off stage—what did it matter—I was an actress, I could play any part. I prepared to play my part as Andrew's wife, the wife of a great man, a diplomat, as I've never played any part since. Andrew was . . . putting me through my paces. I did not mind. Why should I? Auditions, on stage, were part of my business: I did not mind being auditioned off-stage—indeed, I arranged auditions sometimes, charming a boring old man who might be important, making a hatchet-faced old dowager laugh.

"I was a risk for Andrew. A good risk, he hoped, but he had to make sure. The way he set about it, so calm, so cool, so correct, so . . . efficient, melted my heart.

"Andrew did not once touch me," Miss Arbuthnot said. "I did not mind. I was glad. If he had touched me once, he'd have known what I felt, and beyond a peradventure. It was better for Andrew—not to know yet. And then again, everything about him . . . ravished me. His correctness. His properness. His reserve. A great many men had been very much less—reserved in their approaches to me. I adored his reserve."

She sighed. "We had not quite four months together. Then Andrew told me: the next step on the ladder. Third Secretary to the Ambassador at Pintore. I waited for him to say the words: will you marry me? He did not. And of course in a moment I knew he would not—how right he was, it was far too soon, for us, for . . . the ladder. Marriage in any case would mean a long time of waiting. And . . . he had to be sure.

"He would be away two years, he said—perhaps three. 'Yes,' I said, and I managed to smile. 'I will write,' he said. He did not say in so many words 'No more of this nonsense': he had never once mentioned, even obliquely, *my* career. Andrew was always adept at shutting his eyes to what did not please him. 'You'll go home!' he said.

"Andrew sailed. I went home—for a week," Miss Arbuthnot twinkled. "It was no good, I could not stand it, bad enough to live through those years without him. I could not do it that way, in a country parsonage. Besides, if for the rest of my life I was to play my part as diplomat's lady, I needed practice—or so I squared my conscience. It would not have been proper to get a job in London, where people might know me, afterwards recognize me. But . . . a number three tour, I thought. Towns where nobody ever goes. A stage name. No one need know.

"I got my job. A small part—a duchess's daughter. There was a few weeks' delay before I began to get Andrew's letters, sent on from home. Then they came every day. The first one I read, I remember, backstage after the show—I had saved it till then—on a Saturday night, sitting alone on a property basket. I could hardly read it, my hand trembled so.

"It was a long letter. An odd, stiff, correct . . . efficient sort of letter. It told me, briefly, what Andrew had done, what he'd said, what he'd thought . . . and it told me, at length, and in detail, in most minute detail, everything that had happened at Pintore.

"I read to the end and looked up. If I had been the crying type," Miss Arbuthnot said, "I should have cried. A long, stiff, correct, efficient sort of letter and, from beginning to end, not one word of love.

"There was a young man in the company, the stage manager," said Miss Arbuthnot. "Then, he was standing by while the stagehands struck

Continued on page 35

Take a look . . .

1st LOOK

Look at your whites. If you've washed them in Persil, you'll see how much *whiter* they are! A *clean, true, WHITE white. That's Persil white!*

2nd LOOK

See how Persil copes with stains — it even shifts blackcurrant juice. And that's one of THE TOUGHEST WHITENESS TESTS OF ALL! Yes, Persil washes whiter because it washes *cleaner.*

3rd LOOK

See how bright Persil washes your coloureds, how it keeps woollens soft, fine things fresh and clean.

4th LOOK

Look at your hands — see *and* feel how much kinder Persil is than washing powders that are harsh to your hands and nails.

When all is said and done, no other powder does all these four things as well as Persil.

So switch to Persil!

Boil or no boil,

Persil beats the lot!

Persil washes whiter!

—that means ***cleaner!***

PEB 1289A-988

Shortly after being captured, Douglas Bader meets a famous opponent, Oberstleutnant Galland (left). The German fighter ace shows him round his airfield

REACH FOR THE SKY (9) Paul Brickhill's life of Douglas Bader

The man with no legs escapes from prison

Thelma was stunned by the news that her husband was missing. But the daring air ace was very much alive—and planning an escape that would make a laughing stock of his captors

As consciousness returned, Douglas Bader became aware that three soldiers in grey uniform were bending over him, taking off his harness and Mae West. No one spoke that he remembered. They picked him up and carried him to a car in a lane. He felt nothing, neither pain nor thought, only a dazed acquiescence. Then the car moved off, and memory began to return.

His Spitfire had been in a collision with a German Me.109 during a battle over France. He remembered now. . . . There had been an agonizing struggle to bale out from the cockpit on his two artificial legs; his rigid right foot had hooked on to something, and then the metal leg had been torn from the stump as the fastening straps ripped away. Vaguely, too, he recalled some French peasants looking up at him as he floated earthwards in his parachute. Must have looked comic landing with only one leg. Then something had hit him in the ribs and he had blacked out. . . . These men in grey uniforms must be German soldiers. He was a prisoner!

The drive seemed endless, and then there were houses and the car rumbled over the pavé, through the arch of a gateway to a grey stone building. The Germans lifted him out and carried him through a door up some steps and along a corridor . . . he smelt the familiar hospital smell . . . into a bare, aseptic room, and then they were laying him on a padded casualty table. Old memories stirred . . . of that other hospital in Reading, where his legs had been amputated after he crashed his plane in 1931, ten years before.

A thinnish man in a white coat and rimless glasses walked up and looked down at him. A girl in nurse's uniform hovered behind. The doctor frowned at the empty right trouser leg, pulled the torn cloth aside and stared in amazement. Then he looked at Bader's face and at the wings and medal ribbons on his tunic. Puzzled he said: "You have lost your leg."

Bader spoke for the first time since the enemy had captured him. "Yes, it came off as I was getting out of my aeroplane."

The doctor looked at the stump again, trying to equate a one-legged man with a fighter pilot. "Ach, so!" he said obviously. "It is an old injury," and joked mildly. "You seem to have lost both your legs—your real one and your artificial one."

Bader thought: you haven't seen anything yet. He waited with a grim and passive curiosity for the real joke.

"You have cut your throat," the doctor said. Bader raised his hand and was surprised to feel a large gash under his chin, sticky with blood. It did not hurt.

The German doctor peered at it, then stuck his fingers between the teeth and felt round the floor of the mouth. "I must sew this up," he

Bader sits in a Messerschmitt while Galland explains the controls. His crazy idea to take off and escape would have been fatal. Unknown to him, a German (centre) was covering him with a pistol

From a third-floor window of the German prison few hours before, Bader had clambered precariously

murmured. He jabbed a syringe near the gash and the area went numb. No one spoke while he stitched the lips of the gash. "Now we must have your trousers off and see your leg," he said.

Bader thought: this is going to be good. He raised his rump a little as the doctor unbuttoned the trousers and eased them down over the hips. The doctor froze, staring transfixed at the leather and metal that encased the stump of the left leg. There was a silence.

At last he noisily sucked in a breath, and said "Ach!" He looked once more at Bader, back at the two stumps and again at Bader, and said in a voice of sober discovery: "We have heard about you." (The Germans, indeed, had good reason to know Wing Commander Douglas Bader. During the Battle of Britain and later, the famous legless air ace had destroyed twenty enemy aircraft.)

Bader only grunted vaguely in reply. Then he asked, tiredly: "Whereabouts are we?"

"This is a hospital," said the doctor. "St. Omer."

St. Omer! "That's funny," Bader said. "My father is buried here somewhere." (His father had died there as a result of head wounds received in the first World War.)

Longed To See His Wife

Two grey-uniformed orderlies came and picked him up, carried him up two flights of stairs into a narrow room and dumped him like a sack of potatoes, though not roughly, on a white hospital bed. They took his clothes and left leg off, wrapped him in a sort of white night-shirt, pulled the bedclothes over him, stood the left leg, clipped to the broken waistband, against the wall, and left him there.

He lay motionless, aching all over, feeling as though he had been through a mangle, his head singing like a kettle. Every time he stirred, a piercing pain stabbed into the ribs under his heart, cutting like a knife. Reaction drained him and he knew only utter exhaustion, so that for a while he did not think of England or the wing or of captivity, or even of his wife, Thelma.

Dusk gathered slowly in the room and he dozed fitfully. Some time later he woke in darkness wondering where he was. Then he knew and sank into misery, black, deep and full of awareness. He remembered that he was to go dancing with Thelma that night and longed to see her; he felt lonely and helpless without legs among enemies. For the first time in his life he looked back over his shoulder, rejecting the present and trying to hold on to the past, but the clock would not go back and the night moved slowly on. . . .

Bad News For Thelma

None of the pilots in the wing had seen Bader go down during that battle on August 9, 1941. He had vanished after the first dive and did not answer when they called him. In the air they had been chilled by the absence of his familiar rasping banter over the radio. Back at Tangmere, there was stunned disbelief when he did not return. They watched the sky and the clock until they knew he could have no petrol left, and a gloomy hush seemed to fall over the place.

Tom Pike said to Woodhall, the station commander: "You'd better tell his wife," and Woodhall stalled, saying: "No, give him time. He may have landed somewhere else with his wireless useless. He'll turn up."

But John Hunt, a shy young Intelligence officer, thought that Thelma had been told and drove over to her home at the Bay House to cheer her up with a horoscope that a local woman had cast of Douglas, saying that he was in for a dreary time but had a magnificent career after that. He thought it would help her to think that Douglas might be a prisoner.

She was sitting in a deck-chair in the sun, and only when she said, "Hallo, John. Come for tea?" did he realize that she did not know. Somehow, in an agony of embarrassment, he talked of irrelevant things, trying to find an unbrutal way of breaking it, when a car drew up and Woodhall got out and walked up to them. Without preamble he said: "I'm afraid I've got some bad news, Thelma, Douglas did not come back from the morning sortie."

Thelma stood dumbly.

Woodhall went on: "We should get some news soon. I shouldn't worry too much. He's indestructible . . . probably a prisoner."

Too numb to ask what had happened, she stood very pale and said: "Thank you, Woody." Woodhall was saying something else and after a while she became aware that he had gone and that her sister, Jill, was there. Hunt thrust a piece of paper into her hand and said: "This might be a comfort, Thelma. Read it later." Then he was gone.

Jill was saying: "Darling, you *know* he'll pop up again. They can't get him." But Thelma had believed he was invincible and now the whole illusion had burst. She would not cry. A fortnight ago a young wife had cried for days when her husband in the wing had been shot down, and Thelma stubbornly would not repeat the exhibition. As always with strong emotions, she covered them up.

Later "Cockie" Dundas came with flowers in one hand and a bottle of sherry in the other. He had been out alone twice that afternoon over the Channel as far as France looking for Bader's yellow rubber dinghy till Woodhall had ordered him back. He looked tired and felt guilty because he had not seen Douglas go down. He and Jill got Thelma to take a little sherry, but she brought it up again. Stokoe, Douglas's batman, brought in some soup, and tears were rolling down his face.

Later, in bed when they left her, the tears came and she lay awake all night thinking. If they got Douglas, what chance have the other boys got? They haven't any chance. A thought rose and obsessed her all night: how can I warn them? How can I make them understand they will all be killed now?

In the morning the reporters came. . . .

Visit From A Count

Dawn brought new strength to Bader. In the light he saw many things more clearly; knew where he was and what it meant and accepted it. First things first and to hell with the rest. He must get legs and must get word to Thelma.

The door opened and in came two young Luftwaffe pilots, dark young men in tight short tunics pinned with badges, shapely breeches and black riding boots. "Hallo," brightly said the leader, who was Count von Someone-or-other. "How are you?" His English was good.

"All right, thanks." Bader was fairly monosyllabic but the Germans chatted amiably. Would he like some books? They'd just come over from St. Omer airfield to yarn as one pilot to another. Spitfires were jolly good aeroplanes.

"Yes," Bader said. "So are yours."

The Count said politely: "I understand you

hospital at St. Omer hangs a rope of bedsheets. A down it hand over hand, and escaped into the night

have no legs?" He was looking at the foreshortened form under the bedclothes.

"That's right."

They asked what it was like flying without legs. An elderly administrative officer came in and listened, looked at the left leg leaning against the wall and observed heavily: "Of course, it would never be allowed in Germany."

An Old Fear Returns

Later they left and the next visitor was a baldheaded Luftwaffe engineering officer, who asked more boring questions about legs. Bader cut him short: "Look, can you radio England and ask them to send me another leg?" He did not know how they would do it, but if they did Thelma would know he was alive.

The German thought it a good idea. "And while you're about it," Bader said, "could you send someone to look at the wreckage of my aeroplane? The other leg might still be in it."

The German promised to do what he could.

A nurse brought in a basin of water. She was German and not talkative, making signs that he was to wash himself. He did so, moving painfully, and when he got to his legs was shocked to find a great dark swelling high up on his right stump. It looked as big as a cricket ball and was terribly sore. For ten years since the agony of the operations on his legs he had flinched at the thought of anything going wrong with his stumps, and now it loomed large and ugly in his mind.

Later, the doctor came in, looking precise behind the rimless glasses. Bader showed him the swelling. The doctor looked grave and said hesitantly: "We will have to cut this."

Bader burst out, "By God, you don't," panicky at the thought of an experimental knife. They argued violently about it till the doctor grudgingly agreed to leave it for a while.

A dark, plump girl came in, put a tray on his bed, smiled and went out. He realized he was hungry until he tasted the bowl of potato-water soup, two thin slices of black bread smeared with margarine and the cup of tepid ersatz coffee. It left a sour taste in his mouth.

Later it was the doctor again, with orderlies. "We are going to put you in another room," he said. "With friends."

Friends? The orderlies carried him along a corridor into a larger room with five beds and dumped him on one of them. A fresh-faced young man in another bed said cheerfully in an American accent: "Hallo, sir. Welcome. My name's Bill Hall. Eagle Squadron."

Hall had a cradle over one leg which was in traction, the foot pulled up by a weight on a rope. His kneecap had been shot off. In the next bed was a Pole with a burnt face, and beyond him Willie, a young Londoner who had been shot through the mouth. All Spitfire pilots. They chatted cheerfully till well after dusk. Willie and the Pole had been trying to think up some way of escaping, but the Germans had taken their clothes and they had only the nightshirts, which made it rather hopeless. Bader asked: "Isn't there any way out of here?"

"Yes," Willie said bitterly. "Soon as you can stagger they whip you off to Germany." He and the Pole were due to go at any moment.

"If you had clothes," Bader persisted, "how would you get out?"

"Out the ruddy window on a rope," Willie said. "The gates are always open and no guards on them." He jerked his head at the door of the room. "They put the guards outside that door."

"How would you get a rope?"

Willie said there were French girls working in the hospital who might smuggle one in. Bader slipped off to sleep thinking grimly about that, but he slept well and in the morning did not feel so stiff and sore.

The plump girl came in early with more black bread and acorn coffee, and Bill Hall introduced her to Bader as Lucille, a local French girl. He tried to joke with her but she barely understood his schoolboy French, though she coloured nicely and smiled at him again. She did not say anything: a German guard stood in the doorway.

The doctor came in to see his stump but the swelling was visibly less, which was an enormous relief. In his blunt way Bader told the doctor that the food was "bloody awful," and the doctor bridled. Bader waved a piece of black bread in his face and they had a shouting match

Continued on page 27

Thelma Bader's belief that her husband was invincible was shattered by the news that he was missing. But, as always, she concealed her emotions. Only later, when alone, did the tears come

Wanting more animals for his family's circus, James Chipperfield (left) consulted Quinn (right). Together, they toured East Africa

Quinn visited an inventor in Barcelona in his search for a cannon that three weeks," said the inventor. When Quinn called again, he found "Les

James Quinn scours the world for Big Top thrills

by DON EVERITT

Out of a cannon shoot a man and a girl—and Quinn's pen is ready to sign them up. For he fills the star-spangled bills of the circus, and the cry is: "Find us something new"

A SOUTH AFRICAN of Irish extraction, James Quinn knows every circus act from Killarney to Tokyo and goes anywhere to persuade one of them to sign a contract. When Chipperfield's Circus sought an original springboard act, Quinn at once named the Ohstianis, who were appearing in Hamburg. With James Chipperfield, Quinn flew to Hamburg, only to find that the troupe had joined a circus behind the Iron Curtain—in East Berlin.

Flying on to Berlin, the two men failed to get Russian entry permits. Quinn, who speaks German, telephoned the circus and decided to see the show and the Ohstianis illicitly. That night the German circus director called for Quinn and Chipperfield and drove them into the darkened Soviet sector.

Armed security guards searched the car three times. At the circus, Quinn and Chipperfield inadvertently sat near to two uniformed Russians. Performers who recognized the Englishmen spoke to them—in English. "Somehow," says Quinn, who has the quick, clipped voice of a practised negotiator, "we escaped attention and got back to the Western sector. Jimmy Chipperfield had approved my choice and I'd signed up the Ohstianis for him."

Jimmy Quinn, a stocky humorist of forty-five with a Ronald Colman moustache, is a circus artists' agent who represents more than a score of circuses throughout the world—from Duffy's in Ireland to Circhu'y in Saigon. At one time or another, Quinn has booked every type of act seen in or above the sawdust ring. Regularly he sends acts to circuses half-way round the world. He has even sent a tame lion troupe from Britain to the Cirque Dejonghe operating in wild lion country—the Belgian Congo.

For some circuses, Quinn is asked to book entire programmes. For Chipperfield's in Britain he negotiates contracts worth £20,000 a year; for Boswell's in South Africa and for Bullen's in Australia he books acts totalling another £20,000.

Quinn's activities start when a circus director selects the type of acts he wants for a forthcoming season. Quinn then has to find new acts which match the director's ideas. First, he turns to his files in the West End of London office suite which houses his United Circus and Variety Agency. These files contain the majority of the world's circus directors and well over two thousand classified performers.

The search for an act may be lengthy. A French circus director asked Quinn to find a trained falcon act. Quinn tracked down one man in Germany and another in Holland—only to find that both had given up their falcons. After three months, he eventually discovered a suitable act in Lyons.

One year, Boswell, the South African circus

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

could fire two people. "Come back in two or Raluys"—and a British circus had a new act

director, sought a pickpocket for his new programme. Quinn found two mediocre men in Britain, then heard of a "sensational" act in Denmark. "All acts are sensational until you see them," says Quinn, "so Boswell and I flew to Copenhagen."

The pickpocket, Gentleman Jack, was doing two turns in a cabaret. His first left Boswell cold. Quinn thought quickly and went backstage to tell the artist that he would be engaged only if he could steal Boswell's wrist watch. Quinn told Boswell what he had done. The director agreed to the test. After the show, the pickpocket met the two men. Not only did he relieve Boswell of his watch without his knowledge, but he also took his handkerchief, his pen, and the two contracts which the director had brought in readiness. Boswell promptly honoured Quinn's deal.

Often, Quinn cannot find an act ready tailored to meet a circus director's ideas. He then has to induce a likely performer to change his routine. A British circus told Quinn to get a "human cannon" ejecting two people simultaneously. Quinn's inquiries led him to the backyard of a house in Barcelona and to the inventor of a one-man cannon. Quinn stated his requirements.

"Return in two or three weeks," the inventor said. Quinn did so, and incredulously watched a girl enter the cannon with the man. "I had my pen ready as they flew through the air."

Quinn travels constantly to keep up to date with the circus world. Four or five times a month he flies to the Continent. Not long ago, he did an eight-week round-the-world trip, meeting directors, studying and booking acts in America, Honolulu, the Fiji Isles, Australia, Indonesia, Malaya, India, and Italy. Earlier, on the way to do business in South Africa, he joined James Chipperfield in a search for acts and animals in tropical East Africa.

Not every quest ends successfully. In Africa, he and Chipperfield motored for three and a half days across snake and lion country to meet "the world's smallest dwarf." Quinn says: "He must have been standing in a hole when they measured him."

His job does not end when he gets a contract signed. To ensure that performers arrive on time he nurses them from show to show and country to country: he had to fly one troupe out of Berlin because he feared they would be detained if they went by train through the Russian Zone.

The blight of Quinn's life are the last-minute hitches—cancellations, accidents, delays. His encyclopaedic circus knowledge usually gets him out of trouble. For the Boswell Circus last year he signed the Bradford troupe, an Anglo-Belgian acrobatic act, and booked their passages from Southampton for November 11, six days after their tour with a French circus was due to end. Then, early in November, Quinn flew to Southern France and found that the circus director, who had an option on the Bradfords, refused to release them because business was so good. Quinn offered to find a reasonably comparable act. The director scoffed: his own agent in Paris had tried already, without success.

Quinn at once went to Paris and brought to the agent's door the next morning a troupe of Arab tumblers, a trapeze act, a troupe of Chinese acrobats and a perch act, all immediately available. The agent settled for the perch act, and Quinn got the Bradfords to Southampton on the evening of the eleventh.

A Hunch About A Lion Act

In Britain, Quinn invariably attends the opening performances of the circuses he represents to smooth out teething troubles between artists and management. He was at the first performance of a circus for which he had booked a lady lion-tamer when, before the show, the woman told Quinn she was not happy about the act. He got her to run through it quickly. "She did all right, but I had a hunch."

During the actual performance, Quinn did not take his seat in the audience but stood near the gate to the cage erected in the circus ring. Two minutes after the lions entered the ring, one attacked the woman trainer. Quinn shouted for the gate to be opened, told the ringmaster to hold the safety door, and went into the cage, yelling at the lion. The lion stopped mauling the woman, and Quinn dragged her out.

Jimmy Quinn is a man likely to know and get hunches about circus folk and circus animals; he was born in a travelling circus, the son of an Irish clown. He spent the early years of his working life horse-riding, wire-walking, and doing comedy turns in circuses in Europe, Africa and India.

The war put Quinn in the army and, as a private, he helped to devise services shows. He was demobilized in Egypt, came to Britain, hankered after a fresh start on the stage for a while, and finally set up the circus agency.

Clowns Are Hard To Find

Today, Quinn sees many changes in the circus compared with the prewar era. "The labour problem gets more and more acute. Directors even sign up poor acts simply because the people in them can drive lorries or make themselves generally useful. The good acts, particularly the comedy acts, get harder and harder to find. Clowns are the hardest of all. Always the cry is for something new, something original, and people seem to get fewer and fewer ideas."

Recently, a circus asked Quinn to find a man who could balance on one finger. The task was easy. About ten men make a living in the European circus and cabaret world by balancing on one finger. Quinn saw three of them in Paris. All pestered him for the circus contract.

"Look," said one, "I'm better than the others. I'm different."

Quinn could see no difference. "How?" he asked.

"The others all use the first finger of their right hand. I use my left hand."

Quinn signed him up. THE END

The Cutanos—a trapeze act—were brought from Germany by Quinn. He flew one act from Berlin, to avoid rail travel through the Russian Zone

Some circuses ask Quinn to book their whole programmes for them. Performing elephants are part of his £20,000-a-year Chipperfield show

BHOWANI JUNCTION

by JOHN MASTERS

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

A fanatical terrorist was at large in the city; Victoria knew that. She didn't know where he was—waiting for her at home, with a gun

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL RODNEY SAVAGE listened in silence as the girl poured out her story. It could only have happened in the India of 1946—a time of violence and terror as British rule came to an end. She was confessing to the murder of one of his officers.

The girl was Victoria Jones, an Anglo-Indian: she had mixed British and Indian blood. She was a liaison officer at Savage's headquarters: his Gurkhas were guarding the railway around Bhowani Junction. She had killed his adjutant, Macaulay, while fighting off his brutal advances.

Savage had suspected as much. He was more than half in love with the girl himself, had hidden his feelings under a sardonic, hurtful manner; but he understood her problems better than she knew. Most Anglo-Indians tried to be more British than the British. Victoria saw that there would be no room for them in the new India—unless they changed their attitude.

She had tried, desperately, to change hers. She had broken with Patrick Taylor, an Anglo-Indian railway official who was in love with her, and planned to marry his assistant, Ranjit Kasel—a Sikh. For this, she had been rejected by the entire Anglo-Indian community.

After her horrifying encounter with Macaulay, she had taken refuge at Ranjit's home. To her dazed astonishment, Ranjit's mother, Sirdarni Kasel, had received her as a heroine who had "struck a blow for India." For the Sirdarni was connected with K. P. Roy, a terrorist said to be responsible for the recent wave of rioting and train-wrecking in the district.

But now the Sirdarni was in jail; she had been arrested in a house-to-house search for Roy. Meanwhile, the civilian "Auxiliary Force," led by Patrick Taylor, had been called out to keep order in the city.

Victoria's nerves were near breaking point. She made a last effort to go through with her marriage to Ranjit—by taking his religion. But she fled from the initiation ceremony, and left the city by train—only to find Savage on board.

In his carriage, she broke down, told him everything. She felt strangely at peace, protected, secure, as if Savage were the answer to her troubles. She heard her own voice murmur: "I—I don't want to fall in love with you." Then she fell asleep, utterly exhausted.

PART SEVEN

Rodney Savage Takes Up The Story

I WOKE UP with a start and bright lights in my eyes. The wheels had stopped, the windows weren't rattling or the berths creaking. Victoria was still sleeping. Someone's body

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Her mouth was dry, her muscles felt paralysed: she struggled to control herself. Roy gripped her arm. "Do not make any noise, Miss Jones"

Mrs. Lanson said: "This was supposed to be a place where we never saw an Indian." Savage rapped back: "Miss Jones is half Indian—but wholly a lady"

moved across the light outside, and I saw a face at the window six inches from my head. His nose was flattened against the glass.

Victoria awoke suddenly, and she and the face stared at each other for a second. She looked as beautiful as—I don't know what. Then she jerked up the shutter, and gasped: "Rodney, Patrick's at the window!"

I got up and flipped down the catch on the door. We were off. I knew that it must have been Patrick. As soon as I get something good and wonderful and kind, like Victoria, I start to lose it.

The door shook and rattled. Taylor hammered on it with his fists and shouted, "Come out! I saw you! Oah, you beastlee——" He had a strong Anglo-Indian accent. Victoria's was only noticeable when she got excited.

She stood there, trembling. "Patrick!" she whispered.

The doorhandle rattled. Taylor's mouthing was almost unintelligible. "Oah, come out! Oah, you——!"

She whispered, "Do I look all right?"

I switched on the light and looked at her, and said, "O.K." I smiled and tried to make out that I was quite relaxed.

Patrick hammered and hammered. Another voice joined in outside there. It was Bill Heatherington, the man I'd come to Gondwara to see. Bill said, "Please be quiet, my good man. Do you know if this is Colonel Savage's compartment?"

Taylor yelled, "I don't know! Why the hell should I know? Of course it is his, I saw him with——"

Bill said, "There's no need to shout."

Victoria smoothed out her clothes and stood, quivering like a violin string. She said, "Oh, *Rodney*! What are we going to do?" She was entangled in God knows how many sets of values that didn't mean a damned thing to me—but I wasn't going to give her up. I would fight—I must fight—for her with everything I'd got.

So I opened the door. Taylor stumbled on the top step and burst in like a bomb. I put out my arm to steady him and said, "Careful, Taylor. You'll be hurting yourself."

He stood there, pressed back against the wall, with his chest heaving. He was like a big, brave, clumsy buffalo, even to the pale blue-green eyes. He didn't seem to notice me, though my hand was resting on his sleeve, but glared directly at Victoria. Bill Heatherington stood behind him, outside the door. Bill is plump and fortyish, with a small fair moustache and blue eyes. Behind Bill was Birkhe, my orderly, his eyes dancing and his face as unreadable as a Bath bun. A clock face directly above Birkhe's head said 10.16 p.m. This was Gondwara.

Taylor shook his left fist under Victoria's nose. "I saw you. Oah, you—! I saw you with him!" He lashed out at her with his fist. I tightened my grip on his arm and jerked him back, so that his fist hit the wall, not very hard. Bill Heatherington was laughing silently.

Taylor turned on me and bawled: "You, you stuck-up rotter! Just because you are a colonel in thee military department you think you can play fast and loose with my girl. You tried to get me out of thee way by killing me with an ink bottle, didn't you?"

I was sorry I'd never had a chance to apologize to him about that. Now wasn't the time. I said, "Please talk softer, Taylor, I have a pierced eardrum. And stop insulting Miss Jones. I don't know whether she is your girl, but I do know that she is my Intelligence Officer. She has been doing nothing improper."

"I saw you!" he screamed, pounding the berth with his hand.

Heatherington broke in with, "Want any help, Rodney?" and climbed on to the upper step of the door.

I said, "No thanks, Bill. Mr. Taylor's rather excitable, but he is not dangerous." I don't know why I had to be so unpleasant. Well, I do. Plain, common jealousy.

Taylor went pale, and said slowly: "I will shoot you, Colonel Savage, I will shoot you."

I said: "I think defenceless Indian clerks are more your mark, Taylor." It wasn't fair, but I don't play fair. I play to win.

Taylor stared at me with a kind of shocked wonder. "You are a cad, Colonel Savage. You know I was onlee doing my duty to protect the armoured car." He was a most admirable man, really.

I said: "I understand, Taylor. Now—get out."

But he stood there still, in his dirty, white

shirt and his old St. Thomasian's tie and his down-at-heel black shoes, between us two colonels of infantry. Then he said, pleading with Victoria: "Vickee, you were locked in the carriage with him. I am not drunk. Tell me."

She waited for me to answer. I said nothing. At last she said: "You've got it all wrong, Patrick. Please go away. I don't want to speak to you."

Taylor's big hands opened and closed, but there was no one he could strangle there; he turned, bewildered, and stumbled out.

Victoria's knees were shaking, and she sat down suddenly on the edge of the berth. Bill cleared his throat and kept his eyes away from Victoria. Someone blew a whistle, and I said: "We'd better get off the train." I told Birkhe to bring out our kit, and we got down on to the platform.

It was cooler there. Bill, fumbling in his pocket, said: "Here, Rodney, this signal came for you an hour ago. I've just remembered that I came to the station to give it to you."

I read it, and handed it to Victoria.

SECRET. TO 30 RAJ RIF. FROM 1/13 GR. FOR LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SAVAGE. PERSONAL FROM COLLECTOR BHOWANI BEGINS TAYLOR HAS AUTHORIZED SEVERAL AFI MEN KEEP ARMS WITH THEM AS PERSONAL PROTECTION AGAINST ANTI-EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES. HE CLAIMS TO HAVE RECEIVED YOUR PRIOR AUTHORITY. RESULTING SITUATION INFLAMMABLE. PLEASE RETURN BHOWANI EARLIEST TO DISCUSS WITH ME REGARDS GOVINDASWAMI ENDS.

She handed it back to me, and said slowly: "Patrick has a pistol on him. I saw it in his pocket."

I hadn't noticed that. I worked out that Taylor must be in Gondwara to talk to the lieutenant of the Gondwara A.F.I. platoon. He'd find himself in front of a firing squad for fomenting a mutiny if he wasn't careful.

"Victoria," I said, "your leave is cancelled."

She smiled at me, her lips parted. "It doesn't matter, sir. I hadn't even warned my friends that I was coming here to see them."

It was lucky in one way that this affair came up at that moment. Otherwise she might have been thinking more of Patrick, the wronged lover, instead of Taylor, the angry buffalo.

I said, "Fine. Let's go and eat."

Over our meal, Bill and I disposed of the shop which I'd come down specially to discuss, and Victoria made notes for me. Then we went back to catch the train for Bhowani.

GOVINDASWAMI was waiting for me on the platform at Bhowani. He looked very black in that clear morning. Victoria had got off farther down the train. I beckoned to her. When she came up I said to Govindaswami, "Victoria ran away from the gurdwara, Sammy. But she's feeling better now. She burned her feet."

Govindaswami looked at her keenly. He missed nothing. There was no reason why I should go on calling her Miss Jones, though she would always call me "sir" on duty. Sammy was disappointed about what had happened to her, but I think he understood. He'd been through the same thing himself. He said to her, "You tried, anyway. You'll both come and breakfast with me?"

Victoria began to say she really ought to be going, et cetera, but I said, "Come along. We're going to talk shop, and I'm sure the Collector can lend you a notebook and pencil."

Howland had brought down my station wagon, and it was waiting in the yard. I drove; Govindaswami sat beside me; Victoria sat with Howland in the second row of seats, and Birkhe in the third. As we left the yard I glanced over my shoulder and saw Patrick Taylor standing under the station arch, staring after us. Victoria saw him, too.

Govindaswami and I talked in the front seat, but not about the A.F.I. situation. I did my best to keep up my end of the conversation and at the same time listen to Howland and Victoria behind me.

I heard Howland say, "I'm walking aht wiv yer big sis, yer know." His put-on cockney set my teeth on edge. "We go to the pitchers and 'old 'ands. She's a nice piece of homework, if you ask me."

I was a fool not to see then and there how the situation was taking shape. I noted that Howland was going after Victoria's sister, Rose Mary. I noted that Patrick had now been deserted by Rose Mary, in whom he obviously used to find a safety valve when Victoria left him.

What I did not see, like the clever swine I am, was that the troubles were beginning to pile up too thickly on Patrick, and troubles were his trumps.

After breakfast, Sammy took us into the study. We sat down in the familiar, comfortable chairs.

I said at once: "I take it this A.F.I. business is just an excuse, Sammy. What's really happened?"

Sammy said seriously: "No, it is the A.F.I. There's been a good deal of anti-European feeling, which has found a vulnerable target in the Anglo-Indians—stone-throwing, minor assaults, pushing and shoving in the street, abuse, and so on. Well, Taylor came to see me and claimed they weren't getting proper protection from the police. It's true enough, because we just don't have enough police.

"And the second factor is that Sir Meredith Sullivan has died, and Wallingford, the chairman of the Education Trust down in Bombay, has taken the opportunity to announce that he intends to proceed with the sale of St. Thomas's. The Anglo-Indians are in a worse temper than I ever remember. And they are leaderless, not only here but all over India, with Sullivan dead. The point is that some of the Anglo-Indians—not all—now carry arms when they are not in proper military formation or under proper military command. Sooner or later there will be a thoroughly unpleasant incident. Someone will be shot—an innocent bystander, if Taylor is involved—and someone will be lynched."

"And K. P. Roy will be very happy," I said.

He said, "Yes. *Did* you give Taylor any such authority?"

I thought. Taylor had wanted to keep a guard over the armoured car while things were tense. So I told him his guards could keep their arms by them at night—chained to their bodies, the same as we do on the Frontier—until some fixed time every morning when the kote must be opened and the arms properly checked and returned. I told this to Sammy.

Sammy said: "H'm. He put a pretty wide interpretation on that. I want to get those arms back into the kote, and I don't want our A.F.I. here—or even Taylor—to get into bad odour with the army or the railway. They're on the dirty end of the stick—in the dirty middle, as a matter of fact. What do you think's the best thing to do?"

I told him to write an urgent message to Taylor, telling him to get the A.F.I. assembled at ten o'clock, because he feared a big riot in the city. I would go and talk to them.

I sent Victoria home and, after fixing a few things with Sammy, I went to my bungalow.

A FEW minutes before ten I got out of the jeep, on the Pike, and began to walk down the long road towards the Railway Institute. I could see the A.F.I. fallen in on the tennis courts with the armoured car on their right flank and Patrick wandering up and down in front.

I also saw Victoria standing in the shade of the Institute veranda. She had changed into a skirt. I thought she had come to see me deal with a ticklish situation.

I heard someone shout, "Thee colonel is coming!" That was Dunphy from the turret of the armoured car. I walked on, alone, down the middle of the road towards them, the sun in my face. Patrick swung round to watch me. He was chewing his lip continually. He was working out in his mind what to say to the man he had seen locked in a train compartment with his girl.

I reached their makeshift parade ground and stopped, my hands behind me.

Patrick turned clumsily round on his heel, nearly overbalancing, and shouted, "Platoon, 'shun!"

He swung round again, saluted, and yelled, "Number Three Platoon, Third Battalion, the Delhi Deccan Railway Regiment, present and correct, sir!"

I said, "Stand easy, please."

He swung round, remembered he had not saluted, swung round, saluted, swung round. He shouted, "Platoon, stand at ease! Stand—easy!" Once more he swung round, then stood at ease, stood easy. Someone in the ranks tittered.

I strolled forward, smiling genially. I said, "We'll have to get Mr. Taylor a job on the turntable, won't we?"

Patrick flushed furiously, and I got a glimpse of Victoria's white face.

I smiled and stopped. The tittering and talking stopped. I said, "Gentlemen, I've come

Continued on page 37

WHERE IS VINCENT J. FLAVIUS?

HE ARRIVED at Juan-les-Pins on time. He took possession of his luxurious suite of rooms. He met a fellow industrialist, the man he had come to see. He dictated letters, smoked a cigar. He did all these things in a normal, rational way. Then he went out for a walk. It was the last normal thing he did. For he did not come back.

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Alec Green found how quickly flies travel by releasing thousands dosed with radio-active water, and testing trapped batches to see if any were caught

The Green team fights flying poison

by RONALD CLARK

Scientist Alec Green leads his experts all over Britain to defeat the fly and its menace to health. Already, they have one answer to the ancient problem: where do flies go in winter?

HEADING A TEAM OF ASSISTANTS, a forty-year-old scientist named Alec Green called some months ago at a London slaughterhouse and began collecting refuse infested with blowfly eggs. It was loaded into dustbins and taken to Green's headquarters, the Pest Infestation Research Laboratory at Slough. The refuse yielded between 30,000 and 35,000 blowflies, which for three days were fed with water doctored with a special radio-active phosphorus salt.

Meanwhile, Green and his colleagues selected fifty sites in schools, hospitals, shops and houses within a two-mile radius of a London railway siding, and distributed two hundred fly-traps baited with liver. When all was ready, the laboratory flies were collected in six muslin bags and released, five thousand at a time, at the siding.

Next day, and for each of the following ten days, Green and his workers inspected the traps, emptied them, gassed the captured flies, and re-set the traps. The daily catch was taken back to Slough labelled with the time and place of capture. "We collected more than 300,000 flies altogether," says Green. "In the laboratory, we spread the flies out on a tray and passed a Geiger counter quickly across them. Every time the counter buzzed we knew we had got one of our original flies."

More than three hundred radio-active flies were caught, and the locations and times of arrival were plotted on a large map. For the first time, British scientists knew in what direction, and how quickly, blowflies spread from an important trouble centre.

"Our prospect of dealing with the blowfly menace was greatly helped," says Green. "In midsummer there can be as many as twenty-five million blowfly grubs concealed in 15,000 square feet of railway siding. At one place where we worked, about 120,000 blowflies emerged every day from the refuse. Our experiments enabled the authorities to gain complete control for less than £100 a year."

A slim, forceful man who lives with his family at Langley, Buckinghamshire, Green spends most of his working hours trying to find new and more efficient methods of controlling the

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

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ANOTHER SWEET TREAT BY MARS

"And after you tire it, then what?"

fly menace, which is still a summer problem for cafés, food shops and housewives. Though there are no figures to show how many annual outbreaks of food poisoning are due to flies, it is known that many are caused by bacteria which most flies carry.

"There is no doubt," said a Ministry of Health official recently, "that flies on the food all too often mean that members of the family will soon be ill in bed." A heat-resisting bacterium which can produce food poisoning was found on each batch of flies caught during Green's experiment with radio-activated insects.

To find and kill flies at their breeding sites before they have time to move off, Green and his staff visit all parts of Britain with electrical sprayers, smoke generators, insecticidal dusts and sprays, nets and dustbins.

"We are practical scientists," says Green, who earns about £1,000 a year. "By studying the insects in their natural surroundings we hope to develop proper control." In the process, the team is often called in to advise industry, civic authorities and householders.

Flies In The Spire

When complaints were made by several shopkeepers in Wraysbury last year that flies were coming from a church spire, Green and his colleagues were summoned. They climbed ladders inside the spire and set up an electrically operated spray loaded with insecticide. When the spray was turned on, thousands of flies fell from between the slates of the spire.

In spite of this massacre—not a single fly was left alive—the team had to return recently with smoke-generators to clear the spire again.

"The insect was the cluster-fly," says Green, "and even though you wipe it out one year a new swarm will return the next and settle in exactly the same place. We don't know the reason yet, but it probably has something to do with scent."

Cluster-flies hang together by the ten thousand during the winter months in attics and similar quiet places. There were so many in one house to which Green was called that as they died they clogged the hot-water system.

The cluster-fly is one of three main kinds of fly that plague homes. The others are the blowfly (bluebottle, greenbottle and metallic bluebottle) and the common housefly. Because of their habit of flitting between refuse and the kitchen, blowflies are regarded as the most dangerous to public health, and Green has conducted a long series of tests to find the main centres of infestation and ways to control them.

Slaughterhouses were found to be among the worst trouble-spots. At one, more than 75,000 blowfly maggots emerged from forty-five pounds of refuse exposed for only eight hours. This means that a ton of refuse—"not an uncommon amount for a slaughterhouse"—would be a potential breeding ground for about four million blowflies.

Today, Green makes it his business to campaign against prejudice and lack of interest where flies are concerned. In one slaughterhouse, an old worker insisted that the big waste-bins were not responsible for fly-breeding. Green lifted the lids and showed him the thousands of maggots inside. "Even that wouldn't convince him. He just refused to believe that the flies hatched out from the maggots."

In the home, Green finds that decaying scraps of food are the main source of trouble, though rats and mice which have died beneath floorboards have been known to become breeding grounds. Wool waste, thrown into a yard, was once found to be responsible for a fly plague.

One of the worst cases encountered by Green's team was in a railway siding, where refuse was collected from a number of districts, sorted and sent in railway wagons to a central dumping ground in the Home Counties. It was found that grubs were dropping from each refuse wagon at the rate of more than seven thousand an hour. "There was presumably a thirty-mile trail of potential blowflies strung out between London and the Home Counties dump," says Green.

To trace the source of this menace, he and his colleagues went back to the boroughs from which the refuse had come, and from there to individual householders' dustbins.

Although he advocates more intelligent use by housewives of insecticides and has faith in wartime and postwar kinds for home use, Green has also come up against problems created by them. One big local authority's sanitation department smothered a rubbish tip with D.D.T.—only to find that flies were breeding there as before. Two thousand of these flies were caught in nets and taken to the Slough laboratory, where they were bred for thirty generations.

Thrived On D.D.T.

"The thirtieth generation," Green says, "was just as resistant to the D.D.T. as the first." Some of the flies were about two hundred times more resistant to the insecticide than average insects, possibly because they were able to decompose the D.D.T. in their bodies into a harmless form. Four out of ten rubbish tips visited last summer, says Green, were populated by D.D.T.-resistant flies.

Besides dealing with the summer habits of the blowfly and the common housefly, the Slough researchers are on the way to solving a recurrent problem known to them as over-wintering of flies, and to the layman as the mystery of where flies go in the winter-time. Until recently, nobody had been able to explain how flies could possibly live through the cold months. One winter morning, however, a Slough scientist came across a refuse tip where flies could be seen. An investigation began.

"We found that thousands of flies were living their normal life-cycle throughout the winter by staying a few inches from the top of the refuse," says Green. "They were being warmed by the heat of the fermentation going on inside it."

THE END

REACH FOR THE SKY

Continued from page 19

till the doctor stormed out. Lucille came back with lunch—more potato water and black bread.

Later a tall, smart Luftwaffe officer of about forty came in. He clicked his heels, saluted Bader and said: "Herr Ving Commander, ve haf found your leg." Like a star making his entrance, a jackbooted soldier marched through the door and jerked to attention by the bed, holding one arm stiffly out. Hanging from it was the missing leg, covered in mud, the broken piece of leather belt still hanging from it.

Bader, delighted, said, "I say, thanks," then saw that the foot, still ludicrously clad in sock and shoe, stuck up almost parallel to the shin.

"Hell, it's been smashed."

"Not so badly as your aeroplane," said the officer. "Ve found it in the area of the other pieces."

Bader took the leg. He unpeeled the sock and saw, as he feared, that the instep had been stove in. "I say," he said, turning on the charm. "D'you think your chaps at the aerodrome could repair this for me?"

The officer pondered. "Perhaps," he said. "Ve vill take it and see." After a mutual exchange of compliments the officer clicked his heels, saluted and went out.

Real Cup Of Tea

Next it was a new girl, fair-haired and with glasses, carrying a tray. She was Hélène, and everyone goggled to see that she carried real tea on the tray and some greyish-white bread. Apparently the shouting match had been worth while. In the morning the swelling on the stump had deflated, and that was a great relief.

Later the tall Luftwaffe officer marched crisply in, saluted, and said: "Herr Ving Commander, ve haf brought back your leg." As he spoke the jackbooted stooge made another dramatic entrance behind and came to a crashing halt by the bed, not flicking an eyelid, holding out a rigid arm with the leg suspended from it: a transformed leg, cleaned and polished and with the foot pointing firmly where a foot should be.

Bader took it and saw they had done an amazing job on it; the body belt was beautifully repaired with a new section of intricately-worked, good quality leather and all the little straps that went with it. The dent in the shin had been carefully hammered out, so that apart from a patch bare of paint it looked normal. A dent in the knee had been hammered out, and even the rubbers correctly set in the ankle so there was resilient movement in the foot.

"It is all right?" the officer asked anxiously.

Bader, impressed and rather touched, said: "It's really magnificent. It is very good of you to have done this. Will you please thank the men who did it very much indeed."

A Ludicrous Figure

He strapped both legs on, eased off the bed, feeling unsteady for a moment, and went stumping round the room, a ludicrous figure in a nightshirt with the shoe-clad metal legs underneath. Without a stump sock (lost in the parachute descent), the right leg felt strange, and it gave forth loud clanks and thumps as he swung it. The others looked on fascinated.

Beaming with pleasure, the Germans finally left. Bader lurched over to the window and looked thoughtfully at the ground, three floors and forty feet below. To the left of the grass courtyard he could see the open gates, unguarded

They became aware of a drone that began to swell and fade and swell again. The Pole and Willie joined him at the window, and high above they saw the twisting, pale scribble of vapour trails against blue sky; obviously a fighter sweep, and some Me. 109s were having a dogfight with them over St. Omer. Tensely they watched, but the battling aircraft were too high to be seen. Shortly a parachute floated down. A German, Bader hoped. He looked at the con-trails, at the parachute and down at the courtyard and the gates, his mind a fierce maelstrom.

A Luftwaffe sergeant came in and told Willie and the Pole to be ready to leave for Germany after lunch. When he had gone Willie, depressed, said: "Once they get you behind the wire you haven't got much chance." Bader began worrying that it would be his turn next. He *must* stay in France as long as possible.

Lucille came in with soup and bread for lunch. The guard looked morosely in the doorway, and then went away. Bader whispered to the Pole: "Ask her if she can help me get out or put me in touch with friends outside."

Smile From Lucille

In a low voice the Pole started talking to Lucille in fluent French. She darted a look at Douglas and whispered an answer to the Pole. They went on talking in urgent whispers, each watching the door. Bader listened eagerly, but the words were too fast. They heard the guard's boots clump in the corridor, and Lucille, with a quick, nervous smile at Douglas, went out.

The Pole came across and sat on his bed. "She says you're well-known and she admires you tremendously and will help if she can, but she can't get a rope because the Germans would guess how you got it. She doesn't know whether she can get clothes, but she has a day off next Sunday and will go to a village down the line called Aire, or something. She says there are *'agents Anglais'* there."

English agents? It sounded too good. But she was going to try, and hope welled strongly. But Sunday was still several days ahead. Hell, they mustn't take him. Better try to act weak from now on.

That afternoon, Willie and the Pole left for Germany.

In the morning Lucille came in with the usual bread and acorn coffee. The sentry lounged in the doorway. She put the tray on Bader's bed, leaning over so that her plump body hid him from the sentry. He grinned a cheerful "*Bon jour*" at her as she squeezed his hand, and then the grin nearly slipped as he felt her pressing a piece of paper into his palm. He closed his fingers round it and slid the clenched fist under the bedclothes. It was very quick. She said nothing, but her mouth lifted in a pale smile as she went out. The door closed behind the sentry.

"Friend Of France"

Half under the clothes, Bader unfolded the paper and read, written in French in a clear, child-like hand: "My son will be waiting outside the hospital gates every night from midnight until 2 a.m. He will be smoking a cigarette. We wish to help a friend of France." It was signed "J. Hiècque."

Bill Hall looked curiously across and asked: "What's that?"

"Oh, just a message of good cheer," Bader spoke casually, tingling inside with excitement. He tucked the note in the breast pocket of the nightshirt and stuffed a handkerchief on top. It was red hot. Somehow he must destroy it. He knew that the person who bravely signed a name to it was liable to death. Lucille, too.

Now how the hell to get out of the hospital? And he *must* get his clothes back! Couldn't walk round the town in a white nightshirt. (And Bill Hall had said there was a curfew at ten o'clock.) Pretend he was walking in his sleep! With tin legs sticking out under his nightshirt! Silly thoughts chased their tails in his head. *Must* get clothes and *must* destroy the note.

He had his pipe and matches. Reaching out, he picked up his tin legs, strapped them on and walked out of the door. The sentry stood in his way. He pointed to the lavatory and the sentry nodded. Inside the lavatory he closed the door, struck a match and burnt the note, holding it by one corner till it was all wrinkled and charred, then dropped the ashes into the pan and flushed it.

As he walked up the corridor, the sentry gaped at him all the way, and he knew angrily and self-consciously how ridiculous he looked in the nightshirt with the legs underneath. It was

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then that the idea struck him. It was a chance.

When the doctor came in later to inspect the stump again, Bader said in a voice of sweet reason: "Look, I've got my legs back now but I just can't walk around in them with this nightshirt on. It's terribly embarrassing." He explained about the gaping sentry. "I'm sure you'll understand," he went on winningly. "I must have some clothes to wear. Even in bed this nightshirt's a damn nuisance. It gets tangled up in my stumps."

The doctor looked professionally thoughtful and then smiled. "Oh, well, I suppose it is all right in your case. I will have your clothes brought to you."

Half an hour later a German nurse came in with his clothes, put them in a neat pile beside his bed, smiled briefly at him and went out. It was as simple as that.

Champagne For Three

How to get out of hospital! He lay there fiercely thinking about it. No good trying to walk down the corridors and stairs. The guards were posted there day and night. He walked over to the window and stood looking down into the courtyard. Perhaps Lucille's "*agents Anglais*" could help.

He was still there when the immaculate young Count came in with his comrade. "Ha," he said, "it is good to see you on your legs again. Look, we haf brought you two bottles of champagne. Will you come and drink them with us?"

They took him down a flight of stairs to the doctor's room, but the doctor was not there, just the three of them. The first cork popped. It was the first time he had drunk champagne since his second wedding to Thelma, and it developed into a cheerful little party.

The Count had obviously shot down some British aircraft but was too polite to mention that or to ask how many Bader had shot down. In fact, neither he nor his comrade asked any dangerous questions, but both chatted gaily about their own tactics and aeroplanes. Bader liked them both; they were "types" after his own heart and he would have liked to have had them in his wing. What a damn silly war it was!

"Soon you may haf three legs," the Count said. "With the permission of Reichsmarshal Goering, the Luftwaffe has radioed to England on international waveband. They offer to give a British aeroplane unrestricted passage to fly your leg. We have given them a height and a course and a time to drop it over St. Omer." He shrugged, looked philosophical. "They have not answered. I think they will."

Bader gave a chuckle. "I bet they drop it with bombs," he said. "They don't need any unrestricted passage."

The Count grinned amiably and raised his glass. "We will be ready," he promised.

Touch Of Chivalry

There was another thing he said. The Oberstleutnant Galland, who commanded at their airfield, Wissant, near St. Omer, sent his compliments to Oberstleutnant Bader and would like him to come and have tea with them. "We do not try to get information from you," he added quite sincerely. "He would like to meet you. We are comrades, as you say, on the wrong sides."

Bader was intrigued. It would be churlish to refuse, and in any case he would love to meet Galland (probably they had already met in the air). It brought a breath of the chivalry lost from modern war. And it was a chance to spy out the country, to see the other side, life on an enemy fighter station, to weigh it up and compare it.

"I'd be delighted to come," he said.

"Good," beamed the Count. "A car will come for you." Agreeably they finished the second bottle.

The car came bearing the bald little engineering officer, who sat by him all the fifteen miles to Wissant. It was a sunny day and it felt good to be out. They drew up in front of an attractive country farmhouse. German officers stood outside—it was the officers' mess.

As Bader got out, a good-looking man about his own age, dark-haired and with a little moustache, stepped forward. He had burn marks round the eyes and a lot of medals on his tunic. The Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords—one of Germany's highest decorations—hung round his neck. He put out his hand and said "Galland."

Bader put out his own hand. "Oh, how d'you do? My name is Douglas Bader." Galland did not speak English, and the engineering officer interpreted. A lot of others stepped forward in turn, clicking their heels as they were introduced.

Galland led him off, trailed by the others, down a garden path lined with shrubs. Quiet and pleasant, Galland said: "I am glad to see you are all right and getting about again. How did you get on baling out?"

"Don't remember much about it."

"One never does," Galland said. "One of your pilots shot me down the other day and I had to jump out. I landed very hard. It must be unpleasant landing with only one leg."

Bader asked: "Is that when you burnt your eyes?" and Galland nodded.

He led the way into a long, low arbour, and Bader was surprised to see it filled with an elaborate model railway on a big raised platform. Galland pressed a button and little trains whirred past little stations, rattling over points, past signals, through tunnels and model cuttings. Eyes sparkling, Galland turned to Bader, looking like a small boy having fun. The interpreter said: "This is the Herr Oberstleutnant's favourite place when he is not flying. It is a replica of Reichsmarshal Goering's railway, but of course the Reichsmarshal's is much bigger."

Galland led him next along a path through a copse of trees to the low, three-sided blast walls of an aircraft pen. In it stood an Me. 109.

Bader looked at it fascinated, and Galland made a polite gesture for him to climb in. He surprised them by the way he hauled himself on to the wing-root, grabbed his right leg and swung it into the cockpit and climbed in unaided. As he cast a professional eye over the cockpit lay-out, Galland leaned in and pointed things out. Mad thoughts about starting up and slamming the throttle on for a reckless take-off surged through his mind.

Lifting his head, he could see no signs of the aerodrome. He turned to the interpreter. "Would you ask the Herr Oberstleutnant if I can take off and try a little trip in this thing?"

Galland chuckled and answered. The interpreter grinned at Bader. "He says that if you do he'll be taking off right after you."

"All right," Bader said eagerly, "let's have a go."

Galland chuckled again and said that he was off duty at the moment.

So Near, So Far

As he stepped out of the 109, Bader looked across country and saw the sea. Far beyond he thought he could glimpse the white cliffs of Dover and for a moment felt quite sick. It brought it all home to him. And the future. England could be no more than forty miles away. Longingly he thought if only they'd leave him for a moment he could get off with the 109 and be back in the mess for tea.

They had tea in the farmhouse mess, waiters in white coats bringing sandwiches and real English tea. It could have been an R.A.F. mess except that all the other uniforms were wrong.

The atmosphere was wrong too, which was understandable. Everyone smiled, exuding goodwill, but it was a little strained and formal and the talk was stilted. No one tried to pump him for information.

Galland gave him a tin of English tobacco, and when he took him out to the car said: "It has been good to meet you. I'm afraid you will find it different in prison camp, but if there is ever anything I can do, please let me know." He smiled warmly, shook hands, clicked his heels and bowed. At a discreet distance behind, everyone else clicked heels and bowed.

Bader got into the car with the little engineer and they drove back to the hospital. He would have liked to have had Galland in his wing, he thought. Rumour said that Galland had over seventy victories. But of course he had been fighting in the Spanish Civil War and in Poland, too.

His Marching Orders

"How'd you get on?" Bill Hall asked, when he got back.

"Fine," he said. "Jolly fine. They're a good bunch. Got some loot too." He held up the tobacco.

A comatose form lay on the bed by the window and the room stank disagreeably of ether. Bader looked across. "Who's that?"

"New boy came in while you were out," Hall said. "Sergeant pilot. Shot down yesterday. They've just taken his arm off. He's still under the dope."

The door opened and a German soldier wearing a steel helmet came in. The soldier, who must have been awaiting his return, saluted and said in atrocious English: "Herr Ving Commander, tomorrow morning at eight o'clock you vill be pleased to be ready because you go to Chermany."

The words seemed to hit Bader right in the stomach. The German clicked his heels, saluted and clumped out. He sat on his bed, stunned. With deep feeling, he uttered an eloquent word.

Hall murmured: "Tough luck, sir."

Bader roused himself and said crisply: "Well, I've got to get out tonight, that's all."

He lurched over to the window and pushed it open. It seemed a long way down, and immediately below were flagstones. Too high to jump, even if he had real legs. He turned back and scowled round the room, austere with its board floor and five prim beds.

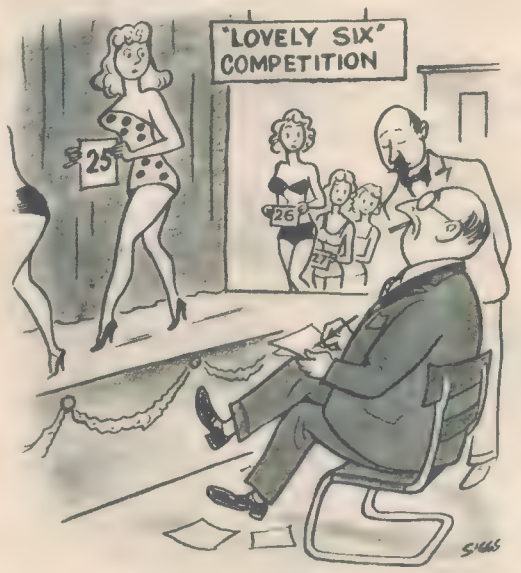
That's it! Sheets—knotted sheets! One learned something from school.

Each bed had an undersheet and a double, bag-type sheet stuffed in the Continental style. He stumbled over to

Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.



WHEN SIR SILAS SCREEN, the film magnate, announced his contest to find the six most beautiful girls in the country, Sandra was one of the thousands of hopeful entrants.

In the newspaper advertisements she read that thirty-six finalists would be interviewed by Sir Silas after elimination tests by public vote. The six winners chosen by Sir Silas would be given three-year film contracts with his organization at £20 a week.

Sandra, who was in the chorus of a touring theatrical company, found herself among the thirty-six finalists after weeks of beauty parades, publicity and suspense.

Tall, fair and admittedly beautiful, she hoped that this would be her big chance, and many of her friends were convinced that she would receive one of the six contracts.

One Monday morning, while she was touring in the north, Sandra received a letter from Sir Silas. It had been written the preceding Thursday, and forwarded to her. Sandra was dismayed to find that Sir Silas asked her to call at his office at 9 a.m. on Tuesday—the very next day.

She wrote to Sir Silas, explaining why she could not keep the appointment, and saying she could attend an interview at any time after the next Thursday. There was no reply. She wrote three or four times after that—without response.

When at last Sandra called at Sir Silas's office, he refused to see her. To her dismay, the names of the six successful girls were published soon afterwards.

Sandra thought things over, decided that Sir Silas had acted unfairly, and sued him for heavy damages. "He made an offer in the newspapers," she told the court, "and I fulfilled the conditions of entry. He was wrong in refusing to interview me. He broke his own promise, and deprived me of a chance that might have made my fortune."

Sir Silas retorted that this was nonsense. "I offered this girl an appointment, and she didn't keep it," he said. "I'm too busy to suit the convenience of other people. Anyway, I can honestly say that I would not have picked her to be one of the six winners. It's just her misfortune."

What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 30

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his bed and ripped the sheets from under the blanket. Need a damn sight more than that! He clumped noisily to the two empty beds and stripped them the same way. With a sudden idea he began ripping the bag sheets along the seams to get two out of each one. The tearing seemed to scream a warning to the Germans.

"Make a noise," he hissed to Hall, and Hall started on a monologue in a loud American voice, talking nonsense and laughing loud and humourlessly. Both were acutely conscious of the guard just outside the door. Once they heard the rasp of a boot on the boards and then a couple of clumps. Bader looked up like an animal at bay. Then came a creak as the guard sat in the wicker-chair outside.

Would The Rope Hold?

"Know anything about knots?" Bader whispered to Hall.

"Not a thing."

He started knotting the corners together in an unskilled double "granny" with three hitches, jerking tightly to make them fast and hoping they would stay so when the test came.

"What about the curfew?" Hall asked.

He said: "Damn the curfew!"

The knots took up a lot of length, and when he had finished the rope was clearly not long enough.

"Here, take mine," Hall said. Gently Bader eased the sheet from under Hall and took off the top one. When he had added them the rope still did not look long enough.

"You'll be up the creek if you're left hanging," Hall warned. "Won't be able to climb back and won't be able to drop without bisecting yourself."

Bader went over to the bed of the sergeant pilot, who was breathing stertorously under the ether. Gently working the sheet from under him, he said: "This is frightful, but I've just got to do it."

"He won't mind," reassured Hall. "I'll tell him when he wakes up."

Soon he had fifteen sheets knotted together, littered around the room, and prayed that no one would come in. He pushed the sergeant pilot's bed to the window, wincing at the noise, knotted one end of the rope round the leg and stuffed the rest under the bed (it still looked pretty obvious). Then he straightened the white blankets on all the beds and climbed back into his own, sweating, heart thumping, praying that darkness would come before the guard.

Time dragged dreadfully while dusk slowly gathered in the room. He and Hall tried to talk in low tones, but his mind kept jumping away from the words. It was not quite dark when the door handle rattled, the door opened and a German soldier stuck his head in and looked round. Bader could not breathe. The guard muttered *"Gute Nacht,"* and the door closed.

Three hours to go. As long as no nurse came to see the sergeant pilot, he might make it yet. . . .

"He's Had It, Thelma"

That evening Thelma, who had eaten nothing for three days, braced herself and asked Stan Turner: "Well, what do you really think?"

The Canadian pilot said with simple directness: "You'll have to face it. We should have heard something by now. I guess he's had it."

In London, the Luftwaffe's radio message had arrived saying that a spare leg could be flown across in a Lysander communications aircraft. Spitfires could escort it part of the way and then Messerschmitts would take over. The Lysander could land at St. Omer, hand over the leg and then take off again.

From Leigh-Mallory and Sholto Douglas at Fighter Command the reaction was prompt, definite and identical. No free passage or German escort (with its lump of propaganda plum cake for Goebbels). They would send the spare leg in a Blenheim on a normal bombing raid.

Three of the pilots of Bader's wing, Dundas, Johnny Johnson and Crowley-Milling, had gone across to the Bay House to do what they could for Thelma. She sat quietly, a sphinx-like stoic, and only roused when the phone rang.

It was Woodhall for her. The others could only hear her saying: "Yes . . . yes . . . yes . . . yes, Woody." She said "Thank you very much, Woody," hung up and came back to the room.

In the silence she sat down and lit a cigarette, trembling a little. Then she blew out smoke and said quietly: "D. B.'s a prisoner." Shouts of jubilation filled the room but she hardly heard, feeling sick with astonishment and delight and with emotions ploughing over her. . . .

Weary aeons of time seemed to have passed before a clock somewhere in St. Omer chimed midnight. The night was breathlessly still. He eased on to the edge of the bed, vainly trying to stop the creaks, and strapped his legs on. Then he dressed. Praying that the guard was asleep in his chair, he took a step towards the window; the boards creaked and the right leg squeaked and thumped with a terrifying noise. Hall started coughing to cover it up as, unable to tiptoe, he stumbled blindly across the floor.

At the window he quietly pushed it open and leaned out, but the night was coal black and he could not see the ground. Picking up the sheet rope, he lowered it out, hoping desperately that it was long enough, but could not tell if it reached the ground. His movements must have roused the sergeant pilot: coming out of the twilight ether, the boy was groaning.

Hall whispered: "We'll have a nurse here in a moment."

Out Through The Window

Holding the rope, Bader leaned his chest on the window-sill and tried to winkle his legs out sideways. They seemed fantastically clumsy, more than ever before, huge, disjointed and swollen. Uncontrollable. Sweating, he took a hand off the rope to grab his right shin and bend the knee. Then somehow he was through, legs dangling, hands clutching the rope on the sill. The terrible pain pierced his ribs again, making him gasp.

Hall whispered "Good luck!" It sounded like a pistol shot.

He hissed "Shut up." And then, "Thanks." Then he started easing himself down.

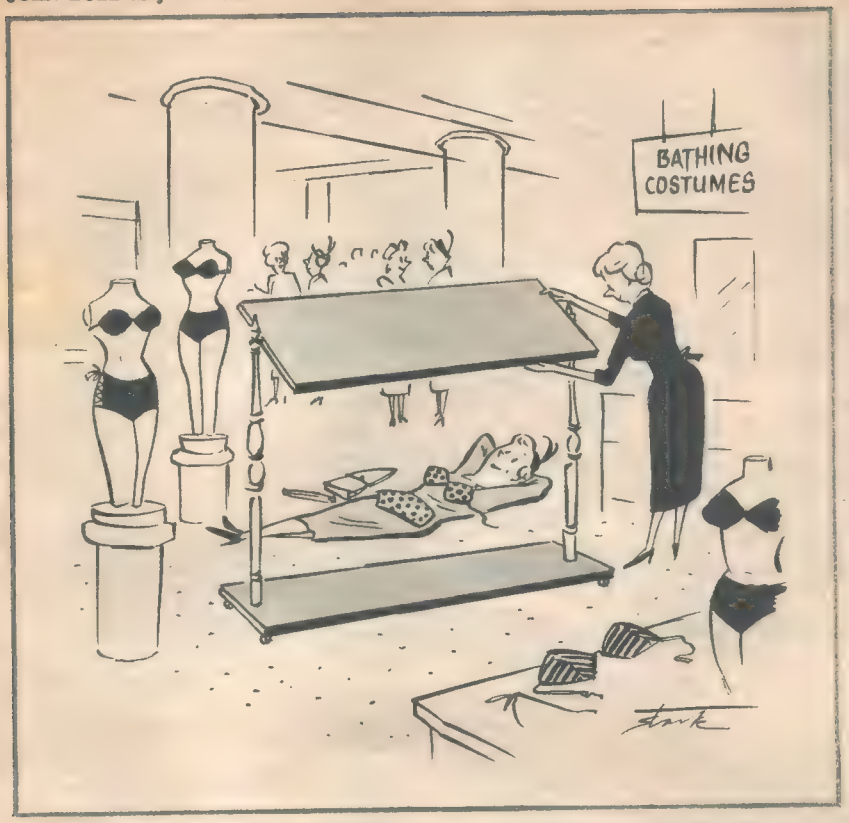
It was simple. His legs rasping against the wall were useless, but the arms and shoulders that had developed such muscles since his long-ago crash took his weight easily. He lowered himself, hand under hand, under sure control. Gripping the sheets was no trouble and the knots were holding—so far.

In a few seconds he came to a window and knew it was the room where he had drunk champagne with the Luftwaffe. He was horrified to feel that it was open, but inside it was dark and he eased his rump on to the ledge for a breather, hoping the doctor was not sleeping inside. Sitting there, breathing quietly, he looked down but still could not see the ground or whether the rope reached it. (Only later he realized he should have counted the knots.) Too late to go back now; he eased himself off the ledge and went on down.

Very gently his feet touched the flagstones and he was standing, dimly seeing that yards of sheet seemed to be lying on the ground. "Piece of cake," he said to himself, and moved a couple of yards on to the grass, cursing the noise from his legs. Warily he steered

Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 28, the judge ruled that there had been a binding contract between Sir Silas and Sandra. He had made an offer, and Sandra had accepted it by entering the competition. Sir Silas had broken the contract by unreasonably refusing Sandra an interview, merely because she could not keep the first appointment at short notice. The contract was not allowed to be purely for Sir Silas's convenience; and Sandra received heavy damages. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases.*)



across the grass towards where the gates should be, hoping that the mysterious Frenchman would be there.

Something loomed darker even than the night. The gates! Good show. Then a shock—they were closed. He got his fingers in the crack between and one gate opened easily. He squeezed through on to the cobbled pavé of the road and instantly, immediately opposite, saw the glowing end of a cigarette. He stumped diagonally across the road and the cigarette moved, converging on him. It came to his side with a dark shadow behind it that whispered urgently "Dooglass!" in a strong French accent.

"*Oui,*" he said, and the shape took his right arm and they moved off along the pavé. The town was like a tomb in which his legs were making an unholy clatter, echoing into the darkness. He could not see, but the silent shape seemed to know by instinct. A pressure on the arm and they turned right and stumbled on.

The Frenchman began muttering to him: "*C'est bon. C'est magnifique Ah, les sales Boches.*"

After a while Bader thought how funny it was, walking through the curfew in enemy-occupied St. Omer, arm-in-arm with a stranger he would not even recognize by day. He began to giggle. The Frenchman said "Ssh! Ssh!" but that only made him giggle more.

Laughter In The Night

He tried to stop but couldn't, and the more he tried the more he giggled as the strained nerves took control. The Frenchman started to giggle and then it was so grotesque, the two of them giggling and clattering down the street, that it grew into loud laughter mingled with the fear inside him that the Germans would hear. Slowly the pent-up emotion washed away and the laughter subsided.

They walked on—and on—and on. Five minutes, ten, twenty. His right stump without the stump-sock began to chafe. Thirty minutes . . . it was sore and starting to hurt. On and on they walked. He was limping badly and the Frenchman made soothing noises that sounded in inflection like "Not far now" in French. Forty minutes must have passed. The steel leg had rubbed the skin off his groin and every step was searing agony. Stumbling and exhausted, he had both arms hanging on to the Frenchman's shoulders.

At last the man took his arms round his neck, picked him up, dangling on his back, and staggered along. In a hundred yards or so he stopped and put him down, breathing in a rasping way. Bader leaned against a stone wall and the man pushed open a gate in the wall beside him.

He led the way and Bader stumbled after him up a garden path. A doorway showed ahead, framing soft light, and then he was in a little, low-ceilinged room with flowered wallpaper, and a tin oil-lamp on the table. An old man and a woman in a black shawl got up from the chairs and the woman put her arms round him and kissed him.

The Gentle Hosts

She was over sixty, Madame Hièçque, plump and with a lined, patient face. Her husband, spare and stooping, brushed his cheeks with a wisp of grey moustache. Fleetingly he saw his guide, remembering mostly the lamplight sheen on the glossy peak of a cap drawn low over the face and the glint of smiling teeth. The young man shook his hand and went out.

The old woman said gently: "*Vous êtes fatigués?*"

Holding on to the table, he said "*Oui*" and she led him with a candle up some cottage stairs into a room with a huge double bed. He flopped on it. She put the candle on the table, smiled and went out. He unstrapped his legs with enormous relief, stripped to his underclothes and slid under the bedclothes, thinking: that's foxed the ruddy Huns; I'll be seeing Thelma in a couple of days. Then he was asleep.

A hand on his shoulder woke him about 7 a.m. The old man was looking down, smiling with tobacco-stained teeth. He left a razor, hot water and towel. Bader freshened up and examined his stump, which was raw and bloodstained, terribly sore. No help for it. Just have to bear the pain. Done it before. He strapped his legs on and went wincingly downstairs.

Madame had coffee and bread and jam waiting, and while he ate she planted an old straw hat squarely on her head and went out. Bader sat for a couple of hours in a red plush chair trying to talk to the old man, a stilted, fumbling conversation of invincible goodwill.

Madame came back in great glee. "*Les Boches,*" it seemed, "*sont très stupides.*" He gathered she had walked to the hospital and stood watching mobs of Germans running around searching the area. Great joke! In halting French he tried to make her understand that his presence was very dangerous to them. If they found him, the Hièçques were liable to be shot. He should leave them and hide somewhere.

Madame said "*non, non, non, non. . . .*" The Germans would never find him here. That evening her son-in-law, who spoke English, would come and

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Toasts were drunk to the bride and bridegroom and then the many congratulatory telegrams were read out. The couple are spending their honeymoon in Bournemouth. For her going-away outfit the bride wore a crisp, blue linen suit with matching straw hat.

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they would discuss things and put him in touch with the underground movement.

At noon the familiar drone came overhead and they took him out into the shelter of the walled back garden. Yearningly he watched the tangled contrails and saw tiny glints as twisting aircraft caught the sun. Out from the windows of houses all round leaned the women waving mops and towels, and shrilling: *" Vive les Tommies! Vive les Tommies!"* It was moving and delightful. Soon he'd be back up there among the con-trails, thinking differently about the sweeps, knowing what they meant. . . .

At 15,000 feet, just south of St. Omer, the Tangmere wing jockeyed round the Blenheim. Crowley-Milling, close escort, saw the bomb-bays open and the long thin box with the spare leg drop out. It looked like a little coffin. A parachute blossomed above it and it floated down, surrounded by the black stains of flak-bursts from the puzzled gunners far below.

Bader's loyal and gallant batman had asked to be dropped by parachute with it to look after the wing commander in prison, but permission was refused. Stokoe had to content himself in helping Thelma to stuff the leg with stump-socks, powder, tobacco and chocolate. . . .

Madame Was Delighted

Madame gave Bader cold pork for lunch and went out again to the scene of the crime. She came back hugging herself with delight. Convinced that Bader could not walk far, the Germans had cordoned off an area round the hospital and were running about like ants, searching every house. But nowhere in this area.

The afternoon dragged. Madame went out again to see the fun. Sitting in shirt-sleeves in the plush chair, Bader thought: roll on that English-speaking chap. About half-past five there came a sudden terrifying banging on the front door and a chill swept him. The old man jumped as though he had been shot, peered furtively through the curtain, turned and whispered *" Les Boches!"*

He grabbed Bader's arm and led him towards the back door. Only at the last moment Douglas remembered to grab his battledress jacket. Together they stumbled into the garden, moving as fast as the legs would let him.

Three yards from the back door, against a wall, stood a rough shed, galvanized iron nailed on posts, covering some baskets, garden tools and straw. The old man pulled the baskets and straw away, laid him on his stomach, cheek pillowed on his hands, against the corner of the wall and piled the straw and baskets on top. Lying there, he heard the old man's footsteps hurrying inside.

There was not long to wait. Within a minute he heard voices and then tramping feet by the back door. He knew the sound of jackboots. The boots clumped along the paved path to the shed. He heard baskets being kicked about. The straw above him started moving with a loud rustle. He lay still, thinking, Here we go!

A Mysterious Noise

Miraculously, the footsteps retreated, diminishing down the garden path. Elation filled him.

Then, the boots were coming back up the path. Suddenly they clumped again into the shed, then stopped and rasped about a yard from his head. From his heart outwards ice seemed to freeze his nerves.

The baskets were being thrown around, the boots rasped on the paving, and then there was a metallic clang that mystified him. There was a movement in the hay just above and another clang. His eyes, turned sideways, saw a bayonet flash down an inch from his nose and stab through the wrist of his battledress jacket to hit the stone floor.

He knew then what the metallic noise had been, and guessed that the next stroke of the bayonet would go into his neck or back.

NEXT WEEK: Bader makes a lightning decision. "Reach For The Sky" is published as a book by Collins at 16s.

"How've they been?"

A TOMB FOR KARMESIN

Continued from page 10

so, is historical fact. I fancy that the eager beaver, Michael Drayton, got at Ben Jonson first, in the Mermaid Tavern, and, having mellowed him with a double-quart of sherry, talked him into promising to write a few lines in honour of the author of *The Faerie Queene*.

Then, in the time-honoured manner of such well-meaning but persistent pests, he went to Shakespeare and said, in effect: " I hope I am not disturbing you, Will, but Ben has pledged his word to write a bit of an ode for poor Edmund. I am turning out a little sonnet myself, in my own poor way. How about you?"

Whereupon, William Shakespeare, unwilling to offend Drayton and Jonson, two tried old friends, pushed aside the tedious manuscript of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and, taking up a scrap of vellum, dashed off what was for him, a very poor sonnet.

Ah, naturally you ask me how Sweetbread knew that it was a scrap of vellum and a sonnet.

Well, Sweetbread did not know. He knew only the bare historical facts. It was I who discovered the details, as I am about to tell you. Briefly: Mr. Three made it clear that he would pay two million dollars, and no questions asked, for that original manuscript of William Shakespeare.

Here, if you like, was something of a tall order! I ask you: walk into Westminster Abbey, open one of the famous graves, rummage in it and walk out undetected. Just try it and see!

I said to Mr. Three: " No doubt, if I were prepared to risk my liberty, you would be prepared to chance a little money in advance?"

Upon this, there was a sordid haggling; but in the end (acquainted with my reputation for scrupulous fair-dealing) Mr. Three agreed to advance me fifty thousand dollars, and to put down a certified cheque payable on a date which I will call the twenty-third.

It was on this date that I guaranteed to deliver whatever manuscripts I might find in the tomb of Edmund Spenser—especially the Shakespeare manuscript. Thus, upon a precarious understanding, I went to work at one of the trickiest jobs in the history of crime, working on a hunch.

Now, exactly why did I pin myself down to this date in particular? I will tell you. Two days before this date, on the twenty-first, workmen were due to enter the Abbey in order to make certain repairs.

Simply, I proposed to join them. And so I did, and thus I carried away, for two million dollars, an original manuscript of William Shakespeare.

But how?

. . . There was a time, my boy, when I used to attend the annual meeting of the Conjurers' Club—myself an amateur—when the leading magicians of the country demonstrated to one another their newest tricks.

One evening, at one of these meetings, a group of five Yorkshiremen dressed as Chinamen walked on and off the stage, putting up an open tent. They went, they came; they came, and they went. This one carried a pole; that one carried a flag; another dragged a carpet; a fourth shouldered a mallet; the fifth stood still in a mandarin's robe and did nothing. They came, they went—never leaving that little stage. But all of a sudden, the little tent being twitched away, there were only four Chinamen. One—two—three—four: categorically four Chinamen only.

They bustled about, picking up pegs, rolling up canvas, fetching and carrying (never leaving the stage) and then, there were two!

Rolled up in the tent, you guess? Not so. The man carrying the canvas let it unroll and fall with a terrible thud. Still, only two Chinamen left out of five, on a bare stage, with no backdrops, mirrors, or other apparatus. Three men spirited away, ha?

This trick I saw through, and remembered. It's a very old one. Let anyone grow accustomed to your comings and goings, especially if you are carrying something, and you remain unnoticeable. As simple as that! In the magician's trick, one person, the mandarin, stood stock-still. Upon him all eyes were concentrated. His four collaborators came and went, and so, under the keenest eyes in the world, could go without coming again, and still, in the imagination of the audience, remain present.

Hypnosis of stillness? That is well enough in its place. But for general purposes, give me the hypnosis of coming-and-going. A combination of the two is difficult to resist.

So I dyed my moustache red and applied to my forehead a lock of hair such as is called a " quiff."

Then I dressed myself in working man's clothes, took hold of a plank, and went with the others into the Abbey; bustled up and down with crowbars and wedges. When in doubt, keep moving as if with a set purpose.

An official looked at me questioningly, once; but, pulling out of my pocket a cold chisel, I shouted: " All right, all right, all right—I'm coming, Jack "—and so disappeared as two men passed me with a thing like a hospital stretcher loaded with concrete.

As often as possible, I carried bulky

objects on my shoulder just in case, in passing, someone chanced to take too keen an interest in my face. I had a bad moment when the foreman accosted me, and said: "Hoi! Who are you? What the hell have you got there?"

But I am a man who has made a habit of anticipating the Unexpected, and foreseeing the Unforeseen. I had, as a matter of routine, found out the name of the foreman, and the names of his immediate superiors.

"Cement, Mr. Edwards," I said, letting fall the sack. "Mr. Graves sent me. He said you was a man short."

He said, with a kind of weary disgust: "I don't know nothing about that. Oh well, all right. Got your card and pass, I suppose? Well, get cracking, Jumbo, and lend a hand with that mortar. Mix, man, mix! We haven't got all day. . . ."

They had not, indeed—there was little time to go before the gang stopped work for the day. But I was annoyed at being recognized as a stranger. My plan originally had been to pass entirely unnoticed; to hide myself in the shadows when the workmen went out, taking my bits of paper at my leisure; and so, out, with a ladder on my shoulder when they came back next morning.

But now I had swiftly to change my plan. I had to stay conspicuous under the very eyes of the foreman, and yet remain invisible.

As usual, I had an inspiration, one of my little flashes of genius. Now any silly sedentary thriller-writer may perpetrate or detect from an armchair, but it takes a man of action with nerves of steel to do what I did then. Slipping into the shadows, I stripped myself of shoes, trousers, and shirt, so that I stood in my underclothes. People have sometimes laughed at me for wearing combinations, or a union-suit, as it is also called. I can tell you, I was glad of that union-suit then. I dipped both hands into a bag of cement which I had placed in readiness, and whitened myself from head to foot.

Then I lay down on the blank surface of a plain tomb, crossed my arms, and kept still. There was only half an hour to go before the whistle blew, but that half-hour was one of the most trying I have ever spent in my life.

My nostrils were full of cement so that I wanted to sneeze, and I itched abominably. Once, I heard the foreman say: "Where's that big slob got to now? The one Graves sent?"

One of the workmen said: "Dunno, gaffer. Thought I see 'im lugging a plank, a little while back."

So he had; but time is a tricky thing when you are on a job and haven't got a watch.

"I'm fed up with the loafers Graves sends me. . . . All right, knock off now. Go home, and eat your sausages and kippers—that's all you're fit for. Pack up!"

One of the workmen naïvely tried to tell him that *his* wife made him a nice meat pie for his tea . . . and there I lay straining every muscle to hold back a monumental sneeze. Thank heaven the lights were being switched out!—for, as they passed me, two of the workmen stopped to look at me.

One of them said: "Who's he, Jack? Never noticed that image before."

"You wouldn't," said the other with contempt. "It's some famous poet. Bin dead a thousand years. Where's yer education?"

"It ain't even life-like," his companion said. "Sort of in'uman, ain't it?"

"Kind of gruesome. But, p'r'aps, they looked like that in olden times. . . . Let's get out of 'ere, they're shutting up."

I do not know whether this was the greatest compliment, or the deadliest insult, I have ever received. It added to my discomfort, however, because in addition to that maddening urge to sneeze, I had a wild impulse to cry, in a sepulchral voice: "*Boo!*" and this impulse gave rise to a terrible desire to laugh.

But they went their ways, and at last I was alone.

The rest was easy, if somewhat

Taxi!
Give the man his exact fare, Henry - not more. His cab's filthy... probably stained my dress!
Can't pick up another fare... too tired... never used to feel fagged out like this after a few hours, though
Taxi!
Never keep up the payments on me cab – I'm behind hand as it is, Martha! You know how long I sleep - but I wake up tired!
Best go to the doctor tomorrow, Bert Melvin
Hope I haven't wasted your time, Doctor?
Of course not! Now look. You're fit as a fiddle, but just because you sleep all night, it doesn't mean you'll wake refreshed – unless you relax every bit of you. That includes mental relaxation too, you know. To help you to get relaxed sleep, I'm going to put you on to Horlicks...
...SO HORLICKS AND RELAXED SLEEP EVERY NIGHT...
SOME TIME LATER
Going to get around a bit at night now, Martha. Means less sleep, but bigger money, too!
Doctor said you didn't need long sleep, Bert - just better sleep. Reckon you're getting that now, by the looks of you!
BANK HOLIDAY
You are lucky, Tim, having your Dad own this!
"We do want to be beside the sea-side"
0674
FXC 847
She's a good old 'bus... and all mine at last! No tiredness now – thanks to Horlicks!
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ghoulish. The Abbey, as you know, is patrolled by watchmen. Having ascertained the times of their coming and going, I could go to work at my leisure. And so I did, with crowbars and wedges.

I was glad that the remains of poor Edmund Spenser were encased in lead, and that the poets had dropped their offerings on top of the casket. Thus, it was not necessary for me to disturb his dust. In the light of my flash-lamp I saw, lying on that leaden surface, some detritus that might once have been paper, but now resembled (let us say) cornflakes. The vellum alone remained, and that only in part. So, I took it; and with all reverence, sealed the tomb. . . .

OH, but that was a long, cold night I spent hiding in the shadows among the graves! But the night passed, and when the workmen came back I was among them in my labourer's clothes, having washed myself in a pail of water that was used to make mortar. There I was, carrying a shovel.

The foreman shouted at me: "You lump! You blithering gowk! Where did you get to yesterday evening?"

"I had a stomach ache."

"Well, take your stomach ache out of here. Take it to Mr. Graves, and tell him I don't want you. I'll pick my own gangs, by the Lord——"

And so I got away with that priceless bit of vellum, for which, true to his word, Mr. Three paid me two million dollars; of which I duly handed half a million to Sweetbread.

There is the story.

"Well," said Karmesin, "you will not believe even such a straightforward story as that now, I suppose?"

I said, in mollifying tones: "After all, Karmesin, such a story is hard to credit without, say, a bit of documentary evidence."

He was not perturbed, as I had feared he might be. "Documentary evidence? But, of course," he said, pulling out of an inside pocket the biggest wallet I have ever seen. "Let me see, now . . . ? let me see. . . ."

He took out a piece of stiff paper about six inches by four and, offering it to me, said: "Here you are. Before I handed over the original, I made a photographic copy. Can you read it?"

I could not decipher more than a word or two. I saw, simply, a couple of detached rags of an old manuscript, but I could read the signature—*William Shakspere.*

"May I have a copy of this?" I asked.

"No, you may not," said Karmesin. "But, if you like, I will rewrite you these lines, as Sweetbread transcribed them in modern spelling."

He took pencil and paper, and here is what I, in my turn, pass on:

. . . nd Spenser
Would that with these poor words
I seal'd my grief
In this cold grave, old friend. Yet
mourn I must
For memory runs more slower than
the thief
That men call Death, and when
these bones are dust
Since grief like noble wine grows
strong and sweet
With Time in shadow, so my
mourning will.

(Lines missing here.)

God grant that you sleep deep while
we who wake
And born to be forgot await our
Night.

William Shakspere.

"Shakespeare did better," said Karmesin, putting back the wallet. "But remember, at that time, he was harassed with show business, and the script of *Much Ado About Nothing.*"

"But," I said, "since the existence of these manuscripts in Spenser's tomb was known, why hasn't the government investigated?"

KARMESIN said: "It has. Acting on irrefutable evidence, the grave of Edmund Spenser was officially opened in 1938. Consult your authorities, if you don't believe me. They opened the grave, and found nothing. I had been there first, you see."

"But the manuscript, the manuscript!" I cried.

Karmesin said: "Ah, that. Pity. Mr. Three married a frugal housewife in 1929; someone after his own heart, more or less. He died not long after. I rather think that a sympathetic collector of unconsidered trifles got hold of the Shakespeare manuscript. I know for a fact that a dealer named Newgate paid an absurd price—ten times collector's value—for a first edition of *Tom Jones,* 'With Miscellaneous Papers, Etcetera,' and, in the spring of 1931, bought a yacht."

"It all seems so incredible," I said.

"I am tired of your 'incredibles.' Why, only the other day a few Scottish amateurs walked into Westminster Abbey, and trotted out with the sacred Stone of Scone, upon which the throne of England stands. Their trick was the same as mine, old as the hills. Child's play. I should not have troubled to mention my little affair, except that I know you to be interested in literary curiosities. Thanks for the lunch. Au revoir."

THE END

LETTERS TO A LADY IN LOVE

Continued from page 15

the set. 'Get off that property basket!' he shouted at me; and stopped. 'What is the matter?' he said. 'Nothing,' I said. 'Nothing at all, nothing is the matter!' I said. And, of course, nothing was the matter, I told myself. This was his letter, Andrew's letter, and so . . . just like Andrew. Proper. Correct. With—as yet—no word of love.

"We travelled the little towns," said Miss Arbuthnot. "Every day came a letter. Every day I'd tremble, I'd read; every day I'd say to myself—of course, of course, what could you expect? This is Andrew, whom you love. Would you have things different?

"A letter every day makes—quite a lot of letters, you know, Mr. Fawcett. Though there was no word of love in Andrew's letters, there were a lot of words. The first letter I carried next my heart; the first twenty I tied up with ribbon and carried in my suitcase. Then it grew difficult to shut the lid. So I bought a special case for them—real leather, very expensive, I couldn't afford it, a sort of Gladstone bag: roomy, to take them all."

SHE smiled. "The stage manager—his name was Morgan—used to tease me about it. 'What have you got in it?' he'd say, 'the crown jewels, that you clutch it so?' (I would never let it out of my sight on train calls). '*My* crown jewels,' I'd say.

"After a while I told him about the letters. I told him that Andrew—wrote to me. That was all. Morgan . . . wished to make love to me, you see, Mr. Fawcett. When a young man wishes to make love to you it is always easiest—best, most final—to let him know that there is somebody else.

"There was a lot of fun on that tour," said Miss Arbuthnot. "Touring is often a lot of fun; which is as well, as I've spent the best part of my life doing it. It is a little like a sea-voyage. Your fellow-travellers make your world.

"The months went by, the letters came. Never a day without one. And never a word of love. Always—always—what happened at Pintore. 'What have you got in this bag now—a body?'

"I should have had to buy another bag if Andrew, as we'd expected, had been away two years. But after six months, of course, the scandal broke. The Guampala Affair was—blazoned, is that word?—in the newspaper headlines. The Embassy at Pintore was closed down. Andrew was coming home.

"It all happened so suddenly. He wired me the date of arrival; he was to dock on a Sunday, fortunately. I had just time to play out my week of notice. I finished on the Saturday night, and next day, when the company moved on to a little town called Hurstmont, I took train for Southampton.

"When Andrew went away," Miss Arbuthnot said, "it was like . . . amputation without anaesthetic. Yes, it was just like that! As if my arm or my leg were cut off; for a long time it went on bleeding. After a while I grew—numb a little; mercifully. But now, in the train, this last day, every minute closer to Andrew, it was as if the anaesthetic had worn off—oh yes, I know: the anaesthetic I hadn't had. The numbness wore off. And bit by bit, painfully—painfully, but so wonderfully—I came back to life.

"I had a long time to wait at the dock," said Miss Arbuthnot. "Somehow I waited. Andrew hadn't changed. Perhaps he looked a little older, a little more sure of himself, a little more handsome. He did not kiss me when we met; he took my hand.

"I had waited—such a long time! I had been—so patient! I will die now, I thought, if he doesn't kiss me! But Andrew tipped the guard (we were travelling back to London); we had a carriage to ourselves. The guard locked the door.

"The train started. Still Andrew did not kiss me. But I did not care—not now. Perhaps I liked it—this delicious spinning out of suspense.

"Andrew talked. I hardly listened at first—it was enough just to hear his voice. Then I realized: he was talking about the Guampala Affair. The events at Pintore. I wanted to laugh," Miss Arbuthnot said, "laughter that was a little pain, all mixed up with tenderness. Oh dearest Andrew, to see him again, after six months, and to hear him talk like this, like his letters. . . .

"Andrew looked at me suddenly. 'You're not listening,' he rapped out. 'Oh, do I *have* to listen now?' I cried, 'to what happened at Pintore, that I already know, that I've read a hundred times, twice a hundred times, in your letters? The letters that are all in a leather Gladstone bag that I take with me everywhere . . . at least . . . that is . . . I. . . .'

"Suddenly I sat up straight and did not speak. Everything went black—yes, it happens just like they say in books: the hammer-blow of shock. What had I done with those letters? I asked myself. Where was that bag?

"Andrew sat there and watched me. 'You have the letters?' he said.

"'Yes—no—I. . . .' What had I *done* with the Gladstone bag, where had I left it?

"'Where—are—those—letters?' said Andrew.

"I looked up at him," Miss Arbuthnot remembered. "I had never before seen such a look on anyone's face.

"'Where are they?' said Andrew. 'I . . . don't know,' I said. 'You don't *know*?' he said. 'No,' I said. Truthfully. 'You mean you've lost them?' said Andrew. 'You've lost them? You've *lost* them? Is *that* it?' "

"*It's not possible!*" Mr. Fawcett broke in. "It is—just—not—possible!" He stood up. He began to pace the floor between chair and window. "Did you realize what you had *done*?" he cried, turning upon Miss Arbuthnot. "Those letters were part of his biography! Part of History! They weren't written to you! They were written to posterity! They weren't yours to lose!"

MISS ARBUTHNOT looked at him. "How very odd," she mused. "You are saying now what Andrew said then—almost word for word. He stood up, as you have. He frowned furiously—oh, just as you do. He, too, began to pace the floor—in so far as one can pace the floor of a railway carriage. He spoke . . . and as he spoke, sitting there in the train, suddenly I saw myself backstage, sitting alone on a property basket, the first time—reading on to the end of his letter to find one word of love . . . I saw myself—oh, so clearly!

"'But those letters were part of my biography!' Andrew raved. 'Part of

DIAMONDS IN THE SKY

by John Clare

THEY wanted him to smuggle jewellery on his plane. He'd refused their bribe, so they must have sent this girl to persuade him. It seemed so obvious . . . and yet the girl seemed genuine. He liked her, and would like to trust her. But was it a risk he could afford to take?

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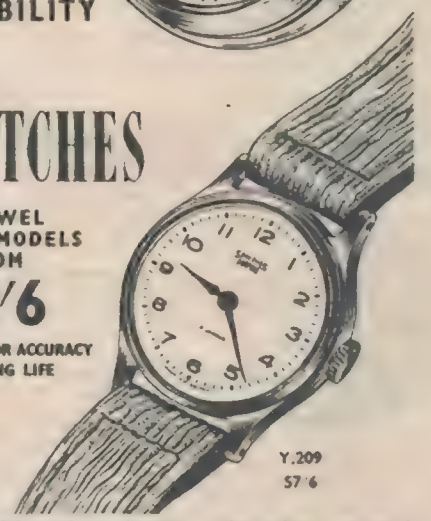

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History! They were written to posterity!'

"'Yes,' I said. 'That's what I thought!'"

Mr. Fawcett pressed down, with force, the already-shut sash of the window. He picked up his hat from the table. He dropped it again.

"It's not *possible*!" he fumed.

"Oh," said Miss Arbuthnot, "come and sit down, Mr. Fawcett, you fidget me, prowling like that—everything is possible. When you are my age, you know, you'll realize that."

Mr. Fawcett continued to prowl.

"History!" he raged. "One of the great dramas of our time and—you lost those letters!"

"Accidents happen."

"Accidents do *not* happen!" flashed Mr. Fawcett. "Not, that is, accidentally. Accidents happen for a reason. A young girl," he muttered, "a chit of a girl, piqued because she did not receive, from a great man, love letters . . . . You *meant* to lose them!"

"Freud might have said so," Miss Arbuthnot agreed tranquilly. "Fortunately, I cannot help thinking, no one in my day had even heard of Freud. I did not think about *why* I had lost the letters—though now, looking back, I fancy you are right. I was a clear-sighted young woman with, it appears, a clear-sighted subconscious. At surface levels I'd fooled myself. Deep down I suppose I'd known the truth all the time. . . . Shall I tell you the rest of my story? You're interested still?"

MR. FAWCETT stood still. He returned to his chair, he sat down, with an effort recovered himself. He began to smile—if with difficulty, with charm. "You must forgive me if I . . . rather lost my head," he observed confidentially. "If—from shock, you know, I said what I shouldn't have said. . . ."

"Andrew and I both said what we shouldn't have said—from shock, you know!" Miss Arbuthnot told him. "Well, I'll go on then. . . . It would be nice to say that I threw the ring in Andrew's face. As I had no ring, I could not throw it. All that I had to throw in his face was words, and I threw them. 'You never loved me!' I said. 'You'll never love anybody. You'll never love anybody but yourself and your wretched career! How could you write of love to me when you don't even know what love *is*?'"

"Andrew did not so much as hear me. Where were those letters? he stormed. Where had I left them—think, think! In a train, on a platform? Was my address inside the bag, for, if so, perhaps even now there was hope—they might be returned.

"'My address was not inside in the bag,' I said. 'That bag never left my side till now. But if I had the letters,' I said, 'if I had those letters here, now, in my hand—you shouldn't have them. You'd never have them,' I told him. 'Never, never, as long as I live.'

"There was nothing that he could do, and Andrew knew it. We travelled the rest of the way in silence. When the train drew in, without a word we walked up the platform together. When we reached the barrier, without a word Andrew turned on heel and left me. He did not even bother to say goodbye. . . .

"I did not know where to go, what to do," said Miss Arbuthnot. "I took the next train to Hurstmont, to the company. Morgan was at the station. 'I thought you'd be back,' he said. 'I met all the trains. Here's your Gladstone. . . .'"

"You—had the letters?" breathed Mr. Fawcett. "You had the letters? You *found* them?"

"*Morgan* had the letters," corrected Miss Arbuthnot. "He'd gone to my digs that morning to carry the bag for me, it was so heavy. I'd caught an earlier train, as you know, so he missed me. However, he found the Gladstone. . . ."

Mr. Fawcett's face was as expressionless as an egg.

"Morgan looked at me," Miss Arbuthnot recollected. "'It's late, you're tired,' he said. 'I fixed up some digs for you—I knew you'd be back. And some food, too, for both of us!'

"He had also," Miss Arbuthnot added, in a blithe aside, "he had also fixed up a roaring fire and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot.

"We ate the food, we cracked the bottle, we had a wonderful party—one of the most wonderful parties of my life! And when the party was at its height—all the best parties have a height, you know—we opened the Gladstone bag and we burnt the contents. With a very great deal of I do not doubt most improper delight. . . ."

Mr. Fawcett made no move. Not a muscle stirred in his firm young face. Till at last, with quick easy confidence, he began to smile. "It was understandable," he observed. "I can see that now. You were very excited—very shocked. A lover's tiff followed up by . . . I've not guessed wrong? . . . followed by—er—a lover's meeting?"

"You mean—Morgan?"

"I mean Morgan. Have I guessed right?"

"Yes, I married him. . . ."

"But of course you married him! The Miss Arbuthnot is—as I should have seen—for stage purposes only?"

"Yes, I married him—long ago. We were . . . very happy. . . ."

"I'm quite sure you were!" Mr. Fawcett announced with charm. "But now . . . you remember the Guampala Affair?" he pursued. "All those letters, read so many times. A quick study—you told me that. And phenomenal memory—that, after all you have told me, I can't help but know. . . ."

Miss Arbuthnot did not reply. Somewhere above Mr. Fawcett's head her eyes were fixed on a point, apparently, of absorbing interest. "I'm afraid the tea is cold"—now she felt the pot—"a glass of sherry, perhaps?"

"Thank you, no. You remember, of course, the Guampala Affair?" Mr. Fawcett bore on doggedly.

STILL Miss Arbuthnot smiled at the distance. "How much of my tale will you tell?" she inquired. "When you're writing Andrew's story—shall I have a part in it? Shall you, for instance, say that the letters from Pintore were mine?"

Mr. Fawcett's eyes were blank, but his lips still smiled. "Ah, now come, Miss Arbuthnot—come!" he rebuked her playfully.

"It's important, you know," she said. "As a line on character. As a . . . turning point, shall we say, in Andrew's career. . . ."

"But you are a woman of the world!" Mr. Fawcett praised her. "In biography—you yourself said it: select and discard, colour and dim——"

"You yourself disagreed."

"At the time. Circumstances, of course, alter cases."

"Yes, of course" Miss Arbuthnot murmured. "Yes indeed. . . ."

"But you remember it all—the Guampala Affair!" Mr. Fawcett urged her.

There was silence in the room.

"I am a very old woman, you know," Miss Arbuthnot faltered. "A *very* old woman, you know. I get so *tired*!"

"But try and tell me—please try. The events at Pintore. The Guampala Affair. Of course you remember——"

Mr. Fawcett broke off. He stared. What on earth had happened to her, the old lady—her calm face working, her firm mouth sagging, her bright eyes dimmed?

"We sent a battleship—I remember that!" Miss Arbuthnot quavered. "Yes, we sent a battleship!" Miss Arbuthnot whispered. "Or was that another time? To some other place? I get *so* muddled up. In those days we were always sending battleships—all that is needed. *Such* a good plan. . . ."

Mr. Fawcett took up his hat and gloves. Without a word he walked to the door, without a word he shut it behind him.

In bell-clear tones trained to reach the last row of the gallery, Miss Arbuthnot blithely called after him her goodbye. THE END

BHOWANI JUNCTION

Continued from page 24

here, first, to thank you for your work in the emergency last week."

Then I read them a telegram of thanks from the Governor for helping to keep order.

I folded up the telegram and gave it to Taylor.

I said: "Here, you'd better frame this in the drill room.'

From the corner of my eye I saw Victoria knotting and unknotting her fingers. The telegram had been sent less than half an hour before, at my urgent request.

I said, "So far, so good. But I think you will all realize that there are people, some of them not a thousand miles from here, who are *not* pleased with that telegram or the things it says.

"These people I am talking about do not like the A.F.I.—or the community which supports it—and would welcome any chance to discredit it." I paused. "Although they don't mind using it when they need it."

I paused again. The men muttered to one another in the ranks. It was obvious that my hint could mean only Govindaswami.

"One of the handles these people are trying to use against the A.F.I.," I went on, "is this business of arms being carried off parade. I authorized that, but when I did so I hadn't thought the matter out carefully enough. Those who want to get the A.F.I. totally done away with will use any incidents involving the force to harden their attitude. For instance, they will be able to use one single incident to finish off St. Thomas's for good."

Taylor said loudly, "St. Thomas's is done for already. Sir Meredith Sullivan is dead, and the Trust are going to sell the school." A lot of men cried out in agreement with him.

Carefully, I played my highest card. I said: "No, St. Thomas's is not done for—yet. There is still hope. I will be happy to write to Mr. Wallingford, backing you up, and trying to make him realize what an injustice it would be to sell the school—if one of you will go down in person and explain how strong your feelings are. You need a new leader. *But*," I went on quickly, "for your sakes, and for the sake of St. Thomas's, I am going to rescind the authorization I gave last week. All A.F.I. weapons will be kept in the kote. They will not be drawn out except by men going on a regular parade with an officer, Mr. Taylor!"

Patrick started and said, "Sir?"

I said, "Some arms and ammunition are in the possession of men not now on parade. You will see that they are handed in to the kote by 2 p.m. today. Bring the kote corporal and his book up to my office at that time."

PATRICK stared straight in front of him, but did not answer. A man in the ranks spoke up uncertainly. "But, sir—the wogs are throwing stones at our womenfolk, sir. They're doing dirty things in front of them and shouting filthy remarks. A lady isn't safe outside her house here, and we're not getting any protection from the authorities."

A strong murmur rose from the ranks. Patrick shifted his position convulsively. His right hand kept straying to his pistol butt as though he needed reassurance that the weapon was still there in its holster.

"I know what's been happening," I said, "and I'm going to put a platoon of my regiment in the Old Lines here, as from tonight—even if it costs me my commission."

I paused. "Now," I said, "let me see if you can pretend for five minutes to be real soldiers. Mr. Taylor, carry on!"

I turned away. I heard Patrick's boots crunch on the crushed rubble of the tennis court. I, and every man on parade, and Victoria on the veranda, heard his mouthed, mutilated abuse, "You rotter, I'll show you, I'll . . . man to man!"

Victoria shrieked, "Rodney, look out!"

I turned slowly round, very slowly. Taylor's face was white in the shadow of his huge topi, and his lips were moving. His fingers jerked on the butt of the pistol, and his whole hand trembled. He had the muzzle unsteadily aimed at the pit of my stomach, and only five feet away.

I looked Patrick in the eye. If I did the right thing, he'd fire. As he was

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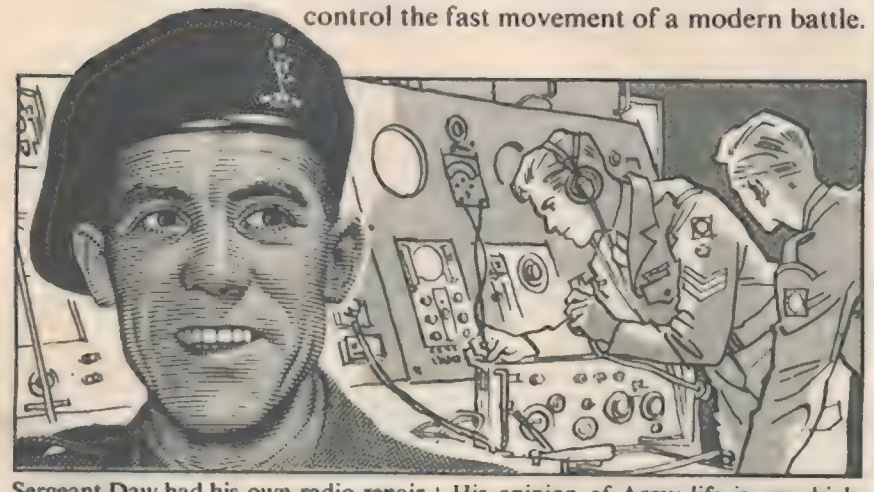
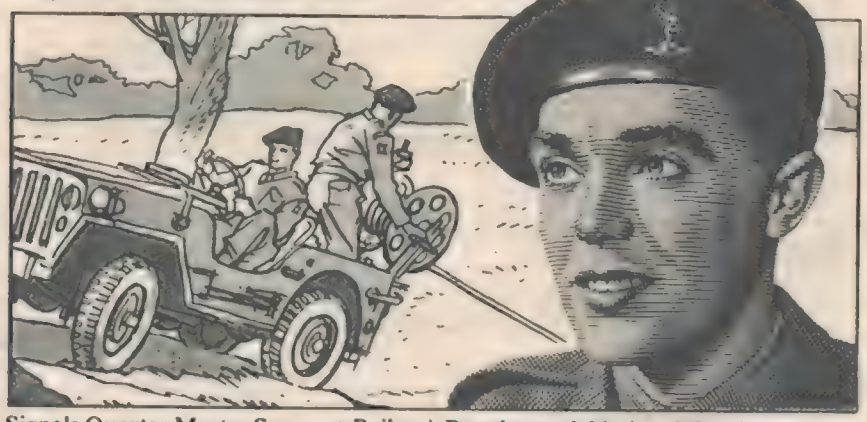


Sergeant Daw had his own radio repair shop in civilian life, and is now an expert on maintenance of radio and electrical equipment in the Royal Corps of Signals. He is in charge of the instruction of Radio Mechanics at Catterick. His opinion of Army life is very high. 'I live in a very pleasant Army house with my wife and family', he says, 'and it only costs 15/6 a week out of my pay of £10.5.2.'



Signals Quarter Master Sergeant Bailey is skilled in the laying and maintenance of communication cables. Having qualified in all three trades of a linesman—Underground Cable, Permanent Line and Field Line, he now takes both Regular and National Service soldiers through the lineman's courses. He, also, lives with his family in a house provided by the Army for 15/6 a week. His pay is £10. 'No wonder I can save at least 30/- a week', he says.

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aiming at my stomach he'd probably hit my arm, or miss altogether. In another of those illuminating flashes, I felt that I ought to let him wound me, preferably quite badly. But my brain and the animal will to win were still too strong, and I was beginning to feel angry with this oaf who kept coming between me and Victoria. I wanted to finish him for good.

After a long wait I stretched out my hand and said, "I'll take your pistol now, Mr. Taylor." I stepped forward and took hold of the muzzle. For ten seconds both of us held the pistol—Patrick the butt, me the muzzle, which was pointing at my stomach.

I didn't pull, but suddenly I felt the weight of the pistol in my hand, and Taylor was stumbling off the parade ground, and there was a long sibilant *sssphеew* of men breathing.

I saw Victoria slump down in a chair and cover her face with her hands. I went after Taylor and caught up with him as he was wandering about in the middle of Limit Road like a man with sunstroke. I hadn't finished with him yet. There were a couple more inches of the knife to get in under his liver.

I went up to him and said, "Taylor."

He stopped, looked at me, and mumbled, "Can't you leave me alone?"

I gave him the pistol and said, "It's still loaded. You are an officer, and you may keep it. But I want your promise that you will not fire it at *anyone*—except me." He looked at the pistol and at me, and gave up trying to understand. He said, "I will shoot myself."

I said, "No, you won't. Only me. If you had an ounce of guts you'd go down to Bombay and see Mr. Wallingford."

He shouted, "I have got the guts! I am not a coward! But I would only make things worse. You don't understand."

I understood only too well. Whatever he did went wrong. That was the last two inches of knife. I said: "How do you expect anyone to stand up for you if you won't stand up for yourselves?"

"All right then!" he said. "By God, I *will* go, Mister Colonel Savage! I'll show you! You watch me!"

I went with him then and there into the Institute, wrote a letter to Wallingford, and gave it to him. So that was that.

At four o'clock that afternoon, Victoria came into my office with some piece of official rubbish. My heart did a climbing turn when I saw her. She stood by the desk, smiling at me.

I picked up my hat and told Chris Glass, the man who had replaced Macaulay, that I was going to my bungalow. I told Victoria to come along, and held the door open for her. She ducked under my arm and got into the jeep. Her skirt looked tight and full of Victoria, after the saris.

RAMSARAN, my bearer, brought tea as we came in. Victoria poured. I said, "Tell me about the sari."

She said slowly, "It was going to be like a magic carpet. It was going to take me away from all the squabbling, and the topis that had to have waterproof covers on, and the betel-nut stains that Mater tries to hide. . . . It carried me away all right. But the place it took me to turned out to be foreign and frightening, and full of strangers. . . ."

I said, "They've opened the Club to non-Europeans."

She said, "They—who?"

I said, "The Club committee." I sipped my tea.

She said, "But they can't do that."

I said: "Well, they've done it here. Tonight the Collector, lord and master of Bhowani, is going to be allowed to enter the Bhowani Club as a member. There's a dance, and I will drink myself insensible if you don't come with me. Will you?"

She put down her tea cup. "Must we go? I think it will be awkward for you and for me. I've been so unhappy, I don't want to——"

I said, "Victoria, we can't run away from people. They're all around us."

She didn't answer.

I said, "Don't you think we ought to find out more about each other? How we live, how we think, what we are? Hadn't we better study each other's sociology and anthropology?"

"There'll be history, too," she said sadly.

I sat back. That was the wisest thing she'd ever said. I said, "Please come. Long dress. Ten o'clock. I'll fetch you."

She sat there, considering, and while she was considering, I took a letter out of my pocket and handed it across to her. It was from G.H.Q. It terminated her duty with my battalion w.e.f. June 12. It announced that on the same date she was to begin again on her three months' leave pending release from the service. Today was June 12.

She stirred her tea. I could see her mind slowly ticking over. She thought it was foolish to hope that anything would come of this beyond what had already come. She didn't think I had any intention of marrying her.

She said, "I'll stay with the battalion until the three months are up, Rodney—if you want me to."

"I want you to," I said. "And I want you to come to the Club."

I CALLED for her a few minutes before ten o'clock that evening. Victoria had never been inside the Club. As we went in she braced herself as though she expected to face a battery of insolent monocles, but in the hall the only starers were the glass eyes of a pair of buffalo heads.

Govindaswami was there in a mixed British and Indian party. Later he asked Victoria to dance.

Our group kept changing. People talked about India a bit, but mainly it was the war, or England, or their future plans—cottages in Devonshire, future meetings at the Berkeley Buttery, prospects for the Grand Military at Sandown. The younger fellows talked to Victoria, and they were a little too young to know how not to be patronizing. Others did it deliberately. She was obviously a blacky-white and obviously in tow of me. There were plenty of people who didn't like me, and I saw at once that they were taking this perfect opportunity to get at me through her. She saw it, too.

But on the whole it was no worse than I had expected. There were the nice ones, like the Dicksons and young Chris Glass; and the neutral ones, like Turnbull and Clewiston and Lanson; and the spiteful ones, like Mrs. Lanson.

She sat a long time with us, talking about England, and every time Molly Dickson tried to turn the conversation into some channel where Victoria could join in, Mrs. Lanson switched it back to England. She was working on a deliberate plan, because finally she did turn to Victoria and say in acid mock-apology, "All this talk of Home must be awfully boring for you, Miss——?"

"Jones," I said.

"Oh yes, Miss Jones. But you see, this club was supposed to be a place where we could get together and never see an Indian face—except the servants, of course—and remember our homes so far away."

"Miss Jones is half Indian," I said, "but wholly a lady." I stared straight into Mrs. Lanson's eyes, daring her to answer back.

She flushed and stuttered, "Why, she—why, you——" But she just didn't have the nerve to go on with it.

Lanson said, "Come on, 'Tricia. Let's dance," and took her away.

Victoria sat with her head up, meeting no one's eye, until Molly muttered, "Oh, for God's sake let's have some bubbly to get *that* taste out of our mouths."

Then Victoria asked me how I thought Patrick would get on in Bombay. He'd left on the mail at three o'clock.

She couldn't stop thinking of him. The more trouble he got into, the more she'd feel that she was the only person who could look after him. Hearing her ask that was like hearing the

"But I only booked to Boulogne"

referee on his way to counting you out—*four*! Well, there was time yet, and I had begun, faintly, to realize where the danger lay.

The next time she came to my bungalow was late Friday afternoon, two days after the dance. She'd been to tea with Molly and came along to me afterwards.

It was almost dark when the bearer showed her in, but a full moon was rising. She was subdued, and I asked her why.

She said quietly, "Molly was asking whether you and I are serious."

I said, "I trust you told her whose business that was?"

She said: "No, Rodney. We talked a bit. She's very kind-hearted, and she was nice to me in Delhi when she didn't have to be. I mean, you weren't there with Henry Dickson as your second-in-command."

That was a nasty dig. I gave her a drink, sat down, and said, "Tell me. Come and sit here." She sat next to me on the big sofa, curled her feet up under her in the way women can, and leaned against me inside my arm. She kissed my ear suddenly and then settled back.

She said: "Molly seemed to be expecting Rose Mary on a social call. I asked her why Rose Mary should call on her. She said, 'Because she is going to marry Master George Albert Howland or die in the attempt.' I didn't say anything because, you know, it does look as if she's right, doesn't it?"

I said, "It does."

Victoria went on: "Then Molly said, rather carefully for her, 'It would be an awful pity, I think, don't you?' and then started to ask questions—about us, I mean. Were we serious—was I, and——"

I said: "You poor girl. You must never get into a talk like that again without some reserve ammunition—which you must not fire off except in the last resort. Here." I lifted her head and looked at her. "Victoria, I'm going to ask you to marry me." She looked back at me, then put her head against mine and kept it there and didn't speak or move for a long time.

Then she said quietly: "Molly was right. One has got to think about these things. She was really trying to warn me that everything isn't wonderful for Anglo-Indians in England, not in the upper classes. Then she was reminding me that if we had children one might be as white as you and the other very dark, darker than Mater."

I began to speak, but Victoria said: "Now Rodney, it was you who called me Miss Starkie." She was quite right. So was I, that first time. The fate of Miss Starkie was one of our hurdles. I thought of two kids in England—brothers at Wellington, say—one white, one dark.

Victoria said: "But what Molly didn't say is that you would be thinking you had to look after me and protect me all the time. Like you did in the club."

I was silent for a long time. Victoria was a wise woman. The tide seemed to be running with Patrick.

I said after a bit: "I'll take you home."

It was a beautiful night, clear and calm, and I suggested we walked. We set out at once, strolling hand in hand in a most unmilitary manner, through cantonments and on down the Pike. The moon was full and the city shone brilliantly clear on our left front.

Suddenly, as we walked, about a hundred men and women swept silently out from between the houses on the left of the Pike. I saw them before they saw me, and thought of running—but there was nowhere to run to. Victoria stiffened beside me, gasped, "Rodney, look at——" and then they were all round us.

I saw that each man carried a stave—a big baulk of wood, rather—and noticed a couple of men with steel crowbars. They didn't touch us, but they were all round us, and saying nothing. I didn't have my carbine with me.

Surabhai, the local Congress leader, forced his way through, peered into our faces and hissed: "Sssst! or you are a dead man—and a dead lady, of course. Good evenings, Miss Jones and Colonel Savage, it is indeed a pleasure to meet you here." He shook us by the hand in turn. Then he glanced conspiratorially up and down the moonlit Pike and whispered: "On, on! We must take this lady and gentleman with us, as they are of the opposition party and will be otherwise in duty bound to give information of our progress to the authorities. Please

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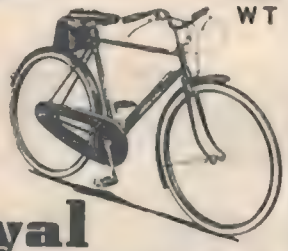

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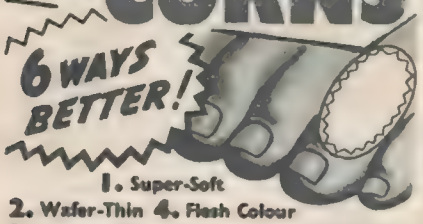

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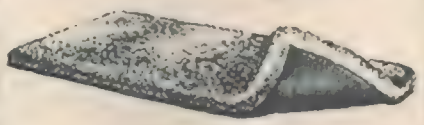

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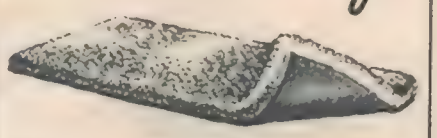

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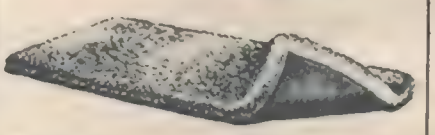

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We crossed the Pike with them, and I saw the Kutcherry ahead and knew what they were going to do.

Mr. Surabhai waved his umbrella—he was not carrying a club—and said: "We have had enough high-handed behaviour on your parts. It is scandalous that the Sirdarni-sahiba should be held in prison without bail. We are going to release her from vile durance."

I said, "Good show," and edged closer to Victoria. I looked around carelessly, trying to sum up the faces. Surabhai was the leader, but he hadn't arranged this, I was sure; it was too well organized. There was a pale, intense-looking young fellow near him. Perhaps he was Roy's hand in this particular job. I did not think the crowd would hurt Victoria or me, but the police sentry at the jail had a rifle, and once he fired, God knew what would happen.

THE intense young man whispered to Surabhai: "Comrade, hold these two and walk with them in front of you to the jail. Tell the sentry they will be hurt if he fires or calls for help."

He had a quick mind, that fellow. Meeting us couldn't have been in the original plan.

Doubtfully Surabhai said to me: "Would you mind that, Colonel?" and I said: "Not a bit. A pleasure."

We reached the gate of the jail, and Surabhai called the sentry. He wandered over, trailing his rifle butt on the ground behind him, and said: "What's the matter, brother?" He was a stolid bullock of a U.P. Moslem.

Surabhai said, his voice breaking with excitement: "Open, comrade, in the name of freedom."

The constable said: "What's that, what did you say? What's the hurry?" The lights were kept burning all night along the jail veranda, and I saw the Sirdarni's face at the bars of her cell.

The young fellow said: "Open, you swine, or we will batter these English people's heads in."

The sentry was beginning to get annoyed. He said: "I can't open for you. There is no order."

The young man whistled and the mob ran forward with their staves and crowbars. They began to push and batter at the gates, all together.

From her cell the Sirdarni shouted: "Climb over the wall, you fools!"

Several men ran round the side and began to climb the back wall of the offices. The constable stood pinned, looking at me for a sign, and the young fellow stood behind me with his club raised.

Two pairs of car headlights jumped on behind us and lit the whole iron fence and us and the backs of the offices and the people trying to climb the wall there. Sammy Govindaswami's voice said: "What is the meaning of this?"

Surabhai swung round and gasped: "The police! Oh, botheration!" He ran forward, doubtless to give Govindaswami a piece of his mind. I saw a row of perhaps fifteen police, with lathis, and three or four more with rifles.

The young fellow behind me screamed: "Charge them! Kill them!" and took a swing at my head. I collapsed backwards into his knees, and as he stumbled forward I got him hard under the chin with the top of my head. He went down, but I had no time to kill him because I saw Victoria being bowled over in the swirl of the mob.

They were surging forward at the police, and stones were flying. The police counter-charged, swinging their lathis.

"Break them into small groups," Govindaswami shouted. Everyone was yelling. The police riflemen didn't take part in the battle, but ran over and pointed their rifles at the men trying to climb the wall. The men scrambled down quickly because they were fully exposed and must have felt very naked.

Good old discipline began to tell, and soon the little knot of police was clearly winning. I picked up a stick and fell on the back of the mob. The intense young fellow had recovered and was in the thick of the fight. He had plenty of guts.

Then suddenly Victoria screamed, "There's K. P. Roy!" But no one heard her except me.

I shouted, "Where?" She came up beside me and pointed, and I saw a fellow in the mêlée swing a police lathi up and round. Then I was unsighted, and I could not swear whether he or another man did it, but the lathi caught Surabhai a real smash on the side of the head. Surabhai fell, the people milled about, and again I saw the lathi swing up—and down. There were no police within fifteen feet of Surabhai.

I DIVED into the ruck, but someone shouted, "Flee! Run!" and everyone took it up, including Govindaswami, and in ten seconds the moonlight was speckled with the shadows of people running like mad in all directions. In ten more seconds they'd vanished among the scattered houses and hedges.

Sammy ran into his office and began telephoning the police barracks. I followed and found Victoria sitting there, looking pale but contained. We gave her a drink of water and a cigarette. She hadn't been hurt physically.

I asked Sammy how he had managed to put on such a fine Campbells-are-coming act. He said sourly, "Private information."

I asked him if he'd drive Victoria and me down to the Old Lines, and bring me back with him. He nodded, and we went out to get into his car.

Partly it was the moonlight making everything white round there, partly it was the excitement and each one of us having had other things to think about—me of Victoria, Victoria perhaps of

me, Govindaswami of his job and Roy —but we'd none of us noticed the body lying on its face near the off front wheel of the car, the body in a white dhoti and scarlet suspenders, yellow socks and co-respondent shoes, with a little blood round the head and a Gandhi cap lying stained with blood beside a police lathi five feet off.

Victoria stopped and swayed like a tree in a high wind, but she wasn't going to faint. She whispered to herself as I put out my arm to hold her.

Sammy knelt down. He said bitterly: "Dead. They murdered him all right. They even managed to get a policeman to do it for them."

I said: "No. I saw. It wasn't a policeman."

Victoria said: "I saw, too. I'm almost sure it was Roy."

Sammy looked up, considering, and shook his head. "It doesn't matter. Here's the lathi. We'll never be able to make anyone believe, whatever we say, however much we exonerate the police in an inquiry."

Victoria said angrily: "Are you going to leave him lying here while you work out who to blame?"

Sammy took her arm and said gently: "No, Miss Jones. But if we don't consider now what to do, there will be more blood shed here, and elsewhere in India, because of this."

She thought a minute, and said suddenly: "Please take me in your car to get Mrs. Surabhai and Ranjit."

"Ranjit?" Sammy said, surprised. But she knew what she was doing, and all at once I did. That was the hell of a woman, and becoming bigger every hour.

They drove off. I carried Surabhai in, and by the time Sammy and Victoria and Ranjit came back a doctor had examined him and pronounced him dead of a fractured skull.

Mrs. Surabhai arrived with some friends in a tonga, and it was all very distressing. Govindaswami gave them permission to take the body away.

Then we were left — Victoria, Sammy, Ranjit and I. Victoria had taken charge, and Sammy waited quietly. She held Ranjit's hand and said gently: "Ranjit, dear, you are a secret Congress man, aren't you?" He nodded. He seemed a lot tougher than he used to be—not chestbeating-tough or gangster-tough, but as if a lot of willow had been taken out of him and steel put in instead. "And you don't really like working on the railway, do you?"

He shook his head. He was looking at her and weighing her to see where she was going next, what she was trying to make him do.

She said: "Both Colonel Savage and I saw this lathi"—it was in the corner, complete with blood and hair—"kill Mr. Surabhai. But it was not a policeman who did it."

"Who was it?" he said.

"K. P. Roy," I said.

"No," she corrected me. "We didn't actually see Roy do it. This is what we saw." She explained clearly, and then said: "I am almost certain Roy wasn't with them when they crossed the Pike and caught us, because I was looking for him. He must have been hanging about on the outskirts, waiting for his opportunity."

"His opportunity to do what?" Ranjit said quietly.

"To start on his campaign to break India from within," Sammy said. "What's holding you politicians together now except hatred of the British? Who will succeed Surabhai as local chairman here?"

"Mehta could," Ranjit said. Mehta was the young, pale-faced fellow who'd taken a swing at me. "Mehta was getting ready to take over when we were all sure you were going to keep Surabhai in jail—after the fishplate was found."

I'd always wondered why Roy put the fishplate there. Now I knew.

Victoria said: "Mehta could succeed—but so could you, if you left the railway service and came into the open."

Ranjit sat there a long time, quite still, then got up and said: "Very well. I will think it over. I will tell

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ON SALE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

you in a day or two." He turned to Victoria and said, in front of us: "You were right to leave the gurdwara, and me, when you did, Victoria. Thank you." He took her hand and kissed it gently in a very European gesture—perhaps his last.

The following Sunday we were at the Collector's again. It was about half past eleven in the morning, and Sammy was signing papers at his desk. He'd had an earlier visitor and I asked him about it.

"Ranjit," he said. "He came here to tell me what he knows about K. P. Roy. It isn't much more than we know already. Roy got a tooth or two knocked out on Friday night. Otherwise he's in good trim and working hard."

I asked if Ranjit had seen Roy since the fight at the jail.

Sammy said: "He says not. Mehta told him—before *he* told Mehta that he was a candidate for the local Congress chairmanship."

"He's doing it, then?" I said. "Leaving the railway and all?"

Sammy nodded. "He thinks he will be elected at a meeting tomorrow. He is already out of the railway. His mother wouldn't tell him anything about Roy, but from what Mehta let slip Ranjit thinks that Roy is still hiding in Bhowani."

I asked Sammy what, if anything, he wanted me to do about it.

He said: "Nothing, I hope. The police are at work. This evening I will get some plainclothes men from Agra and Cawnpore. I have good hopes of catching Roy this time."

Victoria and I spent the day together. I called a tonga to take her home in the evening, and a curious thing happened. When she left me she bent down and kissed the inside of my wrist. Her lips were cool and wet, and the queer forlorn movement leaped up my arm so that I could not take my hand away. It wouldn't move, and my knees went weak from love. The tonga driver watched interestedly from below. When she loosed my hand she stumbled down the steps and climbed into the tonga and jolted away. I stood on the veranda till she had gone, and long after that.

SHE didn't get the chance to tell me until some time later what happened then, but as her story is complete and mine only joined it halfway through, it is her story that I will tell here.

She found Number 4 Collett Road empty, airless and like an oven. She wandered about, opening windows to let in the air.

She sat down in her father's chair in the parlour, kicked off her sandals, closed her eyes and fell asleep.

She awoke slowly to hear someone saying: "Wake up, please, Miss Jones." The voice was small, polite and flat.

A man in a coolie's loincloth was standing over her. He was K. P. Roy. He held a big army revolver loosely in his right hand. His arm hung straight down as though the revolver was too heavy for it.

The slow freeze began at the back of her head, spread forward across her scalp, down her face, into her neck. Suddenly it caught at all her muscles together so that she jerked in a convulsive spasm and sat back where she had been in the chair, but lower.

"Do not make any noise, Miss Jones," Roy said. He talked oddly, like Winston Churchill, because of his missing teeth. "Can you tell me anything about the Collector's plans for capturing me? I would like to know where the military and police posts outside the city are. I thought you would know."

She whispered: "No. I don't know." She moved her eyes to the clock. The hands were very dim on its blurred, white face. Twenty past nine, or a minute after, about.

Roy stepped to the window and glanced out. The street light shone dimly, glistening on his body.

He came back to her and said: "The situation is this, Miss Jones. All the roads and trails leading out of the city are blocked. There will certainly

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

be military patrols in the fields, the railway lines are blocked and an armed policeman is in the cab of every engine leaving Bhowani. But I think that with your help I can surmount these obstacles."

Victoria licked her lips and stared at him.

"Mr. Dunphy is backing out of the yards now with the Down Goods for the Bhanas branch. In a few minutes he will return through the station and start out. I want you to come with me now and stand by the line and wave some suitable object to induce Mr. Dunphy to stop his train. When he does so, you should speak up to him in the cab and keep him busy for a minute or two. What do you suggest?"

She wrung and unwrung her hands. Ted Dunphy was in love with her. He might be able to see from her face that she was in terror. But she would have to control herself, or Roy would shoot her and the policeman, take over the train and ride his luck.

She said: "I don't know—I can't think——"

Roy spoke more sharply. "Very well. You shall tell Mr. Dunphy that Mr. Taylor has threatened to kill you, and you are therefore afraid. You shall ask Mr. Dunphy if he knows where Mr. Taylor is so that you may hide from him. Yes." He nodded. "That will do very well, because it will also account for your obvious state of agitation. Kindly put on your shoes now."

She fumbled with her sandals and at last got them on. They hurried into the passage, turned left, passed out of the back door. He closed the door carefully.

They passed behind the servants' quarters, slipped through the bushes and stood a moment on the other side. She saw no one up or down the line.

They crossed the main line and moved, one behind the other, Victoria in front, into the triangle of wasteland. On the other side of it the Bhanas branch runs in a steep left-handed curve, turning from south to east. They crouched down beside the single stretched wire that leads from Bhowani South Box to the branch line's Up Distant signal. The houses were close and dark opposite.

She heard the shimmer of sound in the rails as soon as he did. Straining her ears, she could hear the slow beat of the engine's exhaust. Ted Dunphy was coming out. The headlight shone on the main line behind them, then on the wasteland as the engine took the points for the branch, then on the branch line. The wheels' flanges ground against the inside of the rail.

Roy said, "Stand up now." He pushed something soft into her hand, "Wave that." She recognized it as the little bolero jacket of the dress she'd been wearing all day. Roy said reassuringly, "I will be right behind you, but concealed."

She heard the clank of the connecting rods and the roar of the blast. The light blinded her, and she began to wave the jacket. The focus of the light narrowed to a single glare in her eyes, then faded, passed by, and spread out. She heard the grinding of brake shoes, and the buffers went *bang-bang-bang* all down the train.

The cab stopped directly above her. Dunphy stuck his head out and said, "Victoria. I thought it was you. What is the matter?" Behind him in the cab the constable lowered the rifle he had held aimed at her while the train slowed.

She glanced wildly round. Roy was crouched under the overhang of the tender. She said, "It's Patrick."

"Patrick?" Dunphy said foolishly.

"Yes, Patrick's talking about killing me. Where is he? I want to hide from him. I'm frightened." She felt worse about telling that lie than anything else.

Dunphy was worried for her, but he had the train to take to Bhanas. He said, "I don't know where he is. Isn't your father at home?"

She said, "No," and Dunphy licked his lips uncertainly. Up there in the cab his face and the policeman's were red and shadowless in the glare of the firebox. At last Dunphy told her to go to his house, where his sister would have to help her until their father came in. He was troubled because he couldn't leave the train and help her himself.

She said, "No. All right. I'll be all right. Thank you," and stepped back.

DUNPHY couldn't do any more. He opened the regulator, and the wheels began to turn. The tender ground past her. She looked for Roy and could not see him. The first wagon passed, and the second. They kept on passing. She began to breathe more easily. She was beginning to feel weak from relief, but when she got her lungs filled she was going to scream. The brake van would come, and the guard would hear. She decided Roy was a fool.

Her mouth was open, ready to scream, when the voice spoke behind her. It said, "Up!"

The train had picked up to walking speed. Roy seized the back of the waist of her dress, and a bunch of skin inside it, and forced her forward against the wheel of the coal wagon. She had only one escape from being pushed into and under the wheel. She caught the handgrip of the brake bar and jumped up. Her dress fluttered out and hung against the greasy axle box. She was furious, even in her fright, because it was a white dress and would get filthy. She scrambled on up, one foot on the brake bar, then got her hands over the side of the wagon. She tried to scream, but had no breath. Roy pushed her over into the wagon. A second later he followed her.

She lay beside him on top of the piled coal. Her chest hurt and she wanted to cry. Roy worked quickly, heaving coal to one side. "Help, please," he said, "this is now urgent." He had tucked the revolver into his loincloth.

She knelt on the coal and pulled it aside until her fingers hurt. Soon Roy said, "Lie down there."

She lay down in the hollow, and he pushed the coal back over her with his foot, until they covered all but a tiny piece of her face. Her dress wasn't white any more.

Roy bent over her and said, "If the train is searched, do not move or make any kind of sound. But, should I say 'Get up,' then get up quickly. Do you understand?" She said, "Yes," and told him she couldn't breathe.

He said, "I think you can. I shall be close by, Miss Jones."

She watched the stars that hung steadily in the sky above. The moon was coming out from behind cloud. Roy had a hollow ready in the coal, but he did not get into it. He sat up near her, his head just poking over the side of the wagon.

The train's speed increased to about twenty-five miles an hour. She thought that a long time passed. Then the rattling and grinding began to slow, and the brakes ground on.

ROY said, "Now be very still." He lay down in the trough he had scratched for himself and pulled down coal until it covered him. Something shoved noisily through under the coal near her face and pressed against her ear. It was cold, round, and hard.

She heard a faint crunching on the gravelled lineside path. It was coming from the front of the train. Listening hard, and holding her breath so that the coal would not creak and drown the sounds, she tried to interpret what she heard. It was nailed boots on the gravel. The boots were coming regularly closer in a smooth rhythm of movement: *crunch-crunch*, for ten or a dozen paces—the clang and scrape of steel on steel—a pause—another clang—a thud—*crunch-crunch*. On both sides of the train.

She worked out that Gurkhas were coming down the train, climbing up to look into each open wagon or inspect the door seals of the closed wagons, then jumping down again.

The muzzle of the revolver seemed big enough to engulf her head. She prayed: Oh God, make them not see us because I don't know what he'll do.

She heard the clang against the side of their wagon. Another pair of boots was moving about, stamping, on the gravel below. She heard the heave and the small gasp of effort as the Gurkha scrambled up. A light flashed against her eyelids. He *must* see. She opened her eyes, peering up through the interstices of the coal. The light wandered away. It clicked off. The Gurkha jumped back to the ground with a thump.

Coaldust tickled her nostrils. She breathed in deep, wrinkling her nose, trying not to sneeze. The boots crunched along to the next wagon, which was a high closed one. She heard the metal seals rattle on both sides, and the heavy bolts shake. The pistol pressed a little harder against her ear. She swallowed the sneeze. The engine blew off steam with a drumming roar.

Soon the steam pressure dropped and the engine fell silent. In the silence she heard car engines and saw lights sweeping across the sky above her. Roy struggled out from under the coal and knelt up to peer over the side.

Faintly from the back of the train someone shouted, "*Sab thik chha*"—the Gurkhali for "Everything O.K." From the front someone else acknowledged the message. The brakes clicked off, the engine exhaust gave out a loud whoof, the wagon rolled back a few inches, then jerked forward. The train began to move.

That was where I came in.

To be concluded next week

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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
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(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, June 12, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,938 result.)

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,938, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

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